13 Shades of Darkness 2.0

A supernatural supervillain sourcebook

by James Thomson

M&M SUPERLINK

plain brown wrapper games

Thirteen Shades of Darkness 2.0

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Table of Contents

Introduction	**3**
#$&*@!! The Cusswad Man	**4**
Joe Postal	**7**
Captain Skumbag	**9**
Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch	**12**
The White Hand	**16**
Doctor Scorch	**21**
Reverend Strange	**25**
The 50,000 Volt Phantom	**30**
The Hand of Pain and Glory	**34**
Contessa Von Blut	**39**
Dr. Jack	**44**
The Saturday Man	**49**
The King in Tatters	**55**

INTRODUCTION

Like most people, you've probably asked yourself *"How can I get my hands on more nightmarish supernatural evil?"* Well look no further! ***Thirteen Shades of Darkness*** contains stats and background information for thirteen occult supervillains, ranging in power from minor annoyances to dark and malignant gods.

Each of our thirteen villains offers a slightly different take on the genre; a shade of darkness all its own. They range in tone from lighthearted to unspeakable (while a few of them are both). Some are traditional supervillains whose powers derive from the occult—thieves, killers and murderous megalomaniacs who use the dark arts to pursue traditional supervillain goals, while some are much worse things.

Each comes with at least two adventure outlines, for twenty-nine adventures in total. All the blood-curdling horror you could possibly want, and perhaps just a little bit more!

Using This Book

The villains in this book are arranged by PL, from the least to the most powerful. There is no official "Campaign World" or setting, no "Plain Brown Universe" that you have to try and shoehorn your campaign into. The various characters do sometimes make reference to one another in their origins and adventures, but this is just for the sake on convenience. Feel free to substitute any evil wizard for Reverend Strange, feel free to substitute any evil god for the Saturday Man or the King in Tatters. You could adopt any one of these villains into your campaign or some of them or all of them. In every case, we have tried hard to keep any of them from distorting the shape of your game-universe—even the real world-eaters. After all, the whole point of this book is to make the GM's life simpler, not more complicated.

It's actually easier to do this with a book of mystical villains, since magic is a sideline for most superhero campaigns; an odd corner of the campaign universe that runs on a slightly different track. Rather than fill in any of the big background elements of your world, I've tried to give you a handful of things lurking in that shadowy corner of the game where magic happens.

Following the same philosophy, we have no new feats, powers or rules to introduce. Nor do any of the characters in this book use any of the variant rules that have been introduced in other volumes. All you will need to make use of this book is a copy of the core M&M rules.

#$&*@!! THE CUSSWAD MAN

Real Name: Merle C. Murrell
PL: 8

"Gimmie that #$% ^&!! ice cream cone, kid! Yer Granny is a @#& %&!!!"

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 8 (-1) **Wis:** 8 (-1) **Cha:** 20 (+5)
Initiative: 7 **Attack Bonus:** 3
Defense: 8 **Toughness Save:** 7 (2 flatfooted) **Fortitude Save:** 8 **Reflexes Save:** 5 **Willpower Save:** -1 (7 vs. superpowered attempts to affect his mind)

Skills: Intimidate 8 (+13)
Feats: Defensive Roll +5, Distract, Dodge Fascinate, Focus +5, Improved Initiative, Sneak Attack, Startle
Powers: Mind Control 10 (Extra: Conscious; Flaw: Sense-Dependant [Target must hear and understand what he is saying]), Mind Shield 8
Complications: Loathsome and vile--alienates anyone who comes into contact with him even briefly, even if this puts him at a serious disadvantage.
Background: Vulgar and crude, lacking any kind of social skills, he's too dumb to be a nerd and too weird to be a redneck. He's a little like the worst, smelliest parts of both.

The Cusswad Man has been blessed (or cursed) with the ability to project negative emotions into other people's minds. He can't do love or bliss, just things like fear, pain, anger and nausea. It only works when he speaks, and only on people who can hear him. Whether this represents some kind of limitation on the power itself or whether he's just never figured out how to use it properly, we leave to the GM. He's never tried using his power while keeping his mouth shut, or projecting less negative emotions, nor is he ever likely to think of trying.

The Cusswad Man mostly uses his paranormal talent to intimidate people into giving him what he wants, screaming threats and filthy insults until they capitulate. His insults make no sense, but are often hilariously obscene. If you're uncomfortable swearing at your players, or if you think they would be uncomfortable with it, try putting "bleep" noises in the place of his cusswords—that may make it even funnier.

In person he is truly vile. Inappropriate and irresponsible, stupid, angry and mean, he flails around like an unwashed, drunken Jim Carrey, telling witless jokes and getting too physical with people. He smells bad.

Neither #$&*@!! himself nor anyone else seems to know where he got his powers. He can only remember about the last five years of his life. Not because his brain has been erased, but because he's really stupid. He was a foster child—he's pretty sure, and was traded around a lot from family to family (in Arkansas, although #$&*@!! doesn't know the state's name and couldn't find it on a map). He thinks adults must have done some awful stuff to him as a kid, because he hates everybody, but he can't actually remember anything before his mid-adolescence. The first he can clearly recall (just after he dropped out of high school) he already had his powers, although

back then they weren't as strong and he only seemed to be able to use them when people picked on him hard enough to get him really mad. Now he can use them whenever he pleases, which is a lot better. He can just barely read, so he must have been to First Grade at some point, he thinks.

The truth is that he bargained for his powers with the Devil at the crossroads. One day he skipped school to go spit on cars from an overpass. Actually he did that on a lot of days, but this particular day was special. Overpasses are funny places—crossroads where the roads don't actually meet. Strange things happen on overpasses.

A gentleman who called himself "Nick Slick" approached the future Cusswad Man (then a mere Cusswad Boy) and offered him one wish, whatever he wanted. Merle's reply was so garbled that it was hard for even Nick Slick to distangle it, but it seemed to be something like "I @#$%! want for ever-#$%&-body to do what I @!#$*!! say!"

His wish was granted, and then he yelled "Now gimmie them @!#$*%!! shoes!!!"

Old Nick Slick laughed and gave Merle his shoes. The Cusswad man has walked in the Devil's loafers ever since.

Using the Cusswad Man in Your Campaign: It hasn't occurred to #$*@!! that he could use his powers to influence politics, take over a multinational corporation or date a pop star. Instead he wanders around at random, stealing food and video game money, getting people to give him their beer. It might cross his mind to rob a bank now and again, but he rarely thinks in such exalted terms.

Nobody's idea of an honorable fighter, the Cusswad Man is nonetheless too dumb to be a coward and will fight on long after things are hopeless (he doesn't much mind going to jail—or at least can't think that far ahead). He'll attack anyone, no matter what the odds. While he won't exactly take hostages, he'll do his best to clutter up the battlefield with mind-controlled innocents and he has absolutely no compunctions about putting them in harm's way.

#$&*@!! has no friends but doesn't seem to care. Perhaps some other villain might make the mistake of teaming up with him, but they'll soon regret it--he's a hopelessly disloyal and irresponsible partner.

Adventures With #$&*@!! The Cusswad Man 1) Beyond Wall-Mart, Beyond Paradise

#$&*@!! Is stumbling around at random, when he accidentally staggers into the "Beyond Paradise Golf Resort and Spa". He has a lot of fun there, ordering waiters to bring him drinks and telling golfers to yank their pants down, but after a few days he gets bored and moves on. This is longer than he normally stays in one place and it attracts more attention from the authorities.

Some very strange police reports start reaching the PCs. The first cops who were sent to the scene never returned or reported in (#$&*@!! ordered them to "Do the 'Magdalina Hagdalina Whookachauka Waukachauka Oka-Moka-Poka Was Her Name' dance" and they're still doing it now.) They send another squad car to scout things out before sending in a SWAT team.

The cops in the second car report that there is no security on the gate and there are signs that the whole compound has broken down into chaos.

Unfortunately for everyone, some crooked police officers notify a bunch of thieves called the "Tricky Dick Clique" (they all wear Richard Nixon masks) that this would be a perfect time to rob the place. #$&*@!! becomes restless and leaves the resort before the Tricky Dick Clique shows up. The SWAT team arrives late, thanks to some delaying from a corrupt superior who is in on the scam.

The PCs show up either just before the SWAT team or just after. The thieves won't want to surrender and will use the bewildered guests as hostages and cover, fighting a running battle with the PCs and cops across the resort's tidy golf courses and tastefully bland spa facilities. Many of the resort's guests and staff are still stuck doing ridiculous things that #$&*@!! commanded them to, so they make

particularly good, helpless hostages. Many of the guests are very rich and in a position to cause considerable trouble for the PCs if they get hurt.

This can also turn into a three-way fight if the SWAT team shows up at the wrong moment and mistakes the PCs for criminals. In the course of the fight, it should become clear that no member of the Tricky Dick Clique has the power to control anyone's mind and that they're as bewildered by what has happened here as the PCs or the cops.

After the fight is over, a quick review of the resort's security tapes or an interview with one of the guests will reveal that #$&*@!! Is still on the loose. Then word reaches the PCs that a weird incident has occurred at a nearby Wall-Mart. Their security staff are running around the snack food section, scratching themselves and acting like chimpanzees. A customer is sitting on the floor watching them as he eats a whole stack of candy bars. The guy eating the candy bars sounds just like the mysterious psi who caused all the havoc at Beyond Paradise.

It's #$&*@!! He felt hungry, so he stepped into Wall-Mart and started eating candy bars off the shelf. A security guard tried to stop him, so he made her act like a chimp. Then more security guards showed up, so he did the same to them. If the PCs fail to catch him at Wall-Mart before he moves on, they will at least have some idea of how to track him. It isn't hard—he's always causing incidents like these

2) Diamonds are a Cusswad Man's Best Friend

Word reaches the PCs of a very strange incident downtown. A supervillain called "Kaptain Skumbag" (also known as "Captain Kill-You", see this gentleman's description on Page 8) is standing on the median strip of a busy six-lane street, brandishing a lamp-post like a baseball bat, knocking cars off the road and begging for somebody to help him.

If they think to check the police reports before they rush to the scene, they will find that less than an hour ago Kaptain Skumbag robbed a diamond import showroom just two blocks from where he's standing. Why isn't he making a getaway? Why is he instead attacking random automobiles in public? What kind of help does he need?

When the PCs arrive at the scene they find that Kaptain Skumbag is eager to explain it all to them, although he's under a mental compulsion to attack anyone or anything that gets within thirty feet of him, which may make conversation difficult. He has badly injured a bystander (some poor teenage girl who had the bad luck to be crossing the street) and he's desperate for the PCs to get her to medical attention, but she's lying next to him on the median strip and he can't keep himself from attacking the PCs if they get that close. He's panicking, begging for help and inarticulate, but if the PCs handle it right they can find out what's going on.

Kaptain Skumbag heard about #$&*@!! and thought he'd be perfect for a particular heist. He asked the Cusswad Man to create a distraction in a public square and draw the cops away from the diamond emporium. Instead of doing his part, #$&*@!! forgot about the heist and went off to get drunk. After the robbery Kaptain Skumbag spotted him staggering around the neighborhood wasted and chased him down to give him a piece of his mind and maybe beat on him a little for dropping the ball. At this moment #$&*@!! had the one bright idea of his criminal career and forced Kaptain Skumbag to become the diversion. He took the diamonds and he's getting away right now. The longer the PCs spend fighting Kaptain Skumbag, the better the Cusswad Man's odds of getting away clean. When he finds out how difficult it is to sell the diamonds, he'll throw them in the river.

JOE POSTAL

Real Name: Joseph Prinn
PL: 9

"I'm just a regular guy who decided he wasn't going to take it anymore. I mean, you see some jerk wearing socks with sandals and it makes you want to bash his brains out, just like most people would. But unlike most people, I'm actually doing something about it."

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: 1 **Attack Bonus**: 9 (with bat) 7 with other attacks **Defense:** 7
Toughness Save: 11 (With Force Field)/ 2 (Without) **Fortitude Save:** 4 **Reflexes Save:** 5 **Willpower Save:** 6

Skills: Intimidate 9 (+9), Knowledge (civics) 5 (+6), Notice 6 (+9), Profession (angry postal worker) 4 (+5)
Feats: Attack Specialization (bat), Startle, Rage, Takedown Attack
Powers: Device: Eye of Rage and Splendour (Blast 11, Impervious Force Field 9 [Power Feat: Selective, can allow matter to pass through at will]; Immovable 5, Super Senses 4 [Danger Sense, Dark Vision, Detect Weird parahuman energy] Note that while the Eye isn't hard to take away from Joe, it is hard to spot, tucked in his mail bag, and therefore counts as a 4pt per level Device), Device: Bat (Deflect 10 [works on all ranged attacks; Extras: Reflect, Redirect] Strike 10; Power Feat: Restricted, can be used only by Joe himself) Note that if Joe loses either the bat or the Eye of Rage and Splendour, he can't use the bat's powers anymore.
Complications: Angry, obsessive-compulsive, explodes at the slightest provocation.
Background: A mean, repressed, tightly-wound little man, obsessively neat and tidy, seething with quiet rage. He worked as a letter carrier for the post office and found life unendurable. Within a few years of taking the job he began to maliciously hide mail, squirreling it away in his car. When they fired him and his wife took the kids away, it drove him around the bend. He probably would have killed his wife, children, himself and perhaps a few random people at some point, but fate intervened.

Joe accidentally walked in on a supervillain called the Hand of Pain and Glory in the act of robbing a bank. Seeking death, he hit the arch-criminal with his mail bag, still stuffed with undelivered letters, and knocked him unconscious. The source of the villain's power, the so-called "Eye of Rage and Splendor" rolled across the rug to the postman's feet. Now Joe Postal wanders through the city on foot, dressed in his uniform, with the Eye of Rage and Splendor in his mailbag, inflicting savage punishment on anyone who gives him the slightest grief or who is the target of his many petty hatreds. Hispanics, convenience store owners who don't speak articulate English, kids with piercings, men with tie-dye shirts, people who play their radios too loud and people who wear white shoes

when it isn't summer are all on his list of enemies and all will feel his wrath. He genuinely hopes that someone will kill him before he reaches his wife's apartment, and does what he now knows must be done.

Using Joe Postal in Your Campaign: Joe Postal is probably best used as a one-shot disposable villain, who gets sprung on the PCs as a surprise. Even though Joe sometimes uses lethal force, and certainly intends to butcher his own wife and daughters, he's convinced that he's a good man, and will try hard not to injure anyone he thinks is an innocent. If he does it by accident, he'll be visibly shaken, but he'll blame the PCs. He might or might not keep hitting someone who tries to surrender, depending on how pitiable they look and how mad he is. He would not take hostages. Joe will try not to fight superheroes for longer than he has to, and will battle them just long enough to exchange a few words and then flee. If Joe Postal becomes a recurrent villain, he will undergo periods of deep black depression where he doesn't show up for months, and then suddenly turn manic and start rampaging again.

Adventures With Joe Postal: 1) Gone Postal

The PCs learn that the Hand of Pain and Glory is back in town. It's a reliable tip. Three different sources have seen him. This is the first time anyone has heard from this mysterious and terrifying supervillain in a year. Most PCs will be itching to fight him.

Before the PCs can track down the tip, the local news reports that the Hand of Pain and Glory is robbing a small branch bank just off downtown. The police have the bank surrounded and the whole thing seems to be turning into a standoff. That's bad news—the last time this guy got into a hostage situation he killed eight people.

But when the Player characters arrive at the bank to confront the Hand of Pain and Glory, they discover to their shock that an ordinary postman has already defeated him, and vanished. Over the next few hours reports come in from across the city of strange, senseless assaults, all of them committed by a man in a mail carrier's uniform. As the PC's engage Joe Postal in a running battle, they learn more about him and his motives, and learn that he has to be stopped before he reaches his destination and kills his family. But where exactly is he going? Where do his ex-wife and kids actually live? If the PCs play their cards right and do enough investigation, it is possible that Joe's family will be spirited away before he gets there, in which case he will slip away too, and plague the PCs again some other time.

2) Special Delivery

After he fails to kill his family, Joe vanishes for a while, sliding into a deep depression. He lives in his mother's basement and watches the shopping channel for days on end without pausing for sleep. Then he decides that this is boring and begins casting about for something else to do.

He starts reading the undelivered mail in his bag. He's never crossed that line before—it was the last taboo he hadn't violated, which makes it very exciting. Joe finds himself deeply repelled by some of the people these letters are addressed to. The ones who clearly won't write back to their aging, lonely parents, the ones who are just going to ask for more money even after they cash the enclosed check, the ones who are refusing to answer some repeated cry for help. The gay ones and the ones who don't speak English annoy him, too.

Joe decides to go deliver these letters, and beat the living crap out of the recipients. He'll appear at their front door in his uniform, with his bat in one hand and their open letter in another. First he'll give them the opened letter, then he'll give them a lecture on how awful they are and then he'll give them the beat-down. Can the PCs discover the pattern to these vicious beatings and figure out a way to intercept him before he kills somebody?

CAPTAIN KILL YOU

(aka Captain Skumbag)

Real Name: Todd Treadwell
PL: 10

"I am the Harbinger of pain, the bringer of blood and sorrows! Women kill their children when they hear my voice, for they know there is no hope! My fist is the velocity of hate! I eat only your blood; I drink only your skulls! Gnnaaaauugh! ... Heh. That was pretty good, wasn't it? I ought to have my own breakfast cereal."

Str: 30 (+10)/20 (+5) **Dex:** 14 (+2)
Con: 18 (+4) **Int:** 14 (+2) **Wis:** 10 (+0)
Cha: 14 (+2) **Initiative:** 2
Attack Bonus: 10 **Defense:** 10
Toughness Save: 10 (Impervious)
Fortitude Save: 10 **Reflexes Save:** 8
Willpower Save: 2

Skills: Intimidate 5 (+7), Knowledge (popular culture) 5 (+7), Notice 5 (+5), Stealth 1 (+3)
Feats: Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Startle
Powers: Enhanced Strength 10, Impervious Toughness 4, Leaping 9 (x1000), Protection (Extra: Impervious) 6, Regeneration 5 (+5 to Recovery Rate), Super-Senses (Low-light Vision) 1, Super-Strength 8 (Power Feat: Thunderclap)
Complications: Won't hurt innocent bystanders under any circumstances.
Drawbacks: Hideous (very common, moderate) -4pts
Background: Smash stuff, steal stuff, drink beer, dance in clubs, throw up, pass out, repeat. Life is good. Or at least that's how it seemed to Captain Skumbag when he got into the supervillain game. Now he's twenty-nine, and he hasn't done one single thing with his life. He's always short on cash, always scared of getting killed and the law is always just one jump behind him. Most of the friends he used to party with are married now or in rehab or dead. The newer kids speak slang that isn't quite his slang anymore—and anyway the world of New York's underground clubs can start to seem pretty narrow and confined after you've been there every night for years.

He's getting sick of sleeping in squats and peeking out of the windows, sick of being frightened all the time. Was this what he gave up his life for? Is this all there is? And if there's anything more, how would he find it now?

Captain Skumbag's criminal record won't make it easy for him to find a normal life. Nor will all his pending arrest warrants. And there are master criminals who are used to being able to call on him as a hulking, ferocious henchman and who won't be pleased if he tries to tell them that he's retired. Then there's his appearance to consider. Apart from the fact that he's seven and a half feet tall and blue, his whole body is covered with tattoos, he's had his teeth surgically modified, his eyes glow in the dark--he's too weird looking to fit in much of anywhere but the club scene or college. He tried college briefly but it didn't work—an opportunity to rob an armored car came up and anyway he was failing most of his courses.

Despite the way the criminal life has soured on him, Captain Skumbag is still a jovial, cruel opponent who loves a good fight like nothing else. He bellows and talks trash. He mocks his opponents and says scary, nonsensical things to rattle them (*"Tasty are the meek!"* or *"Some people look pretty tough before I eat them, but*

when they come back out they all look the same!" or some such).

He always seems to have a vicious grin, even when he's losing. He likes pain a lot, and the harder you beat him, the louder he laughs. But he isn't as tough as he looks. While Captain Skumbag enjoys frightening people and getting attention, most of his talk is just for show. Killing people doesn't really appeal to him, dead bodies are sticky and gross in his experience. He may threaten to eat someone or to peel them like a grape, but it's just to rattle their cage. He's worked with guys who actually do stuff like that and the memories it left him with still make him shudder.

While he tries to look as though he doesn't care whether or not he wins or loses a fight, this too is mostly just for show. He doesn't care much about his safety, but he values his freedom a lot—he gets bored easily, and prison is a torment to him. In fact the only time he's likely to become really dangerous is if he gets cornered and panics.

Captain Skumbag doesn't really talk much about his origins. Sometimes he claims that he doesn't know who he is, or he implies that the truth about him is so horrible that it must remain forever a secret. In fact it's just embarrassing.

Todd Treadwell is the hyperactive, ne'er do well son of an ordinary middle class academic family on Long Island. His father teaches comparative religion at NYU, his mother is a violinist who sometimes plays for the Metropolitan Opera but mostly teaches music at Columbia University. He loves his parents, despite sometimes claiming to have eaten them, but he's much too ashamed to ever think of going back to them for help.

Even the way he got his powers is too stupid, uncool and banal for him to ever admit to it. His parents sent him to prep school, where he was the only kid who liked Norwegian death metal and Satanism. He tried to summon up the devil in his dorm room with a ritual he found in some sleazy paperback—not because he actually believed in any of it, but because he thought that as the school's resident outcast metalhead/goth he ought to do things like that. Unfortunately, the Saturday Man heard him and was amused by his lack of sincerity. So he gave the poor silly boy the power he claimed to want, and sat back to watch him destroy himself. It has taken years, but it was worth the wait. Soon Saint Murder may appear to him again, and offer him a grisly deal. His life back, in exchange for some foul and shocking crime.

Using Captain Skumbag in Your Campaign: An all-purpose supervillain with a twist, you can use Captain Kill-You as a super-thug for hire, an evil mastermind's bodyguard or even a bank robber. You can play up his tragic side or hide it from the PCs' view, as seems appropriate.

Adventures With Captain Skumbag 1) **My Name is Captain Kill-You, and I'm a Slobbering Maniac**

Captain Skumbag joins Alcoholics Anonymous, where he meets either an alcoholic Player Character, or an alcoholic friend or relative of a PC (if there's no way to work this in, then the group's therapist is either a PC or a close associate of one).

Captain Skumbag has been having terrible migraine headaches, and blackouts as well. He talks freely about crimes he's committed and gives any Player Character present a look into his secrets, origins, problems and anxieties. This works particularly well if the PC continues to fight Captain Skumbag outside of therapy, battling him in the street and foiling his attempts to rob banks, listening to him rant and bluster while they know it's all an act.

The GM should make a particular point of explaining to the PC that it's absolutely against the rules to ever repeat anything anyone says in the therapy group, or to act on anything that they hear there.

If a PC isn't actually present at the meetings, then someone who is tells them all about Captain Skumbag even though it's against the rules. It's just too fascinating not to talk about. Then, someone smashes their way into a jewelry store and leaves a security guard dead and mangled at the scene. All the details implicate Captain Skumbag. But the Player Character knows

beyond a doubt that he was actually at his AA meeting when the crime took place. How will the PC use this information without compromising their secret identity and/or getting their friend kicked out of therapy (or possibly hounded out of their career, if the NPC is a therapist)?

2) It Takes a Skumbag

Captain Skumbag is making an unsuccessful attempt to retire. He's used the loot from a recent big score to buy himself a place off in the woods on an island in a river. We'll leave the exact location undetermined so that the GM can do a better job of working it into the game. He's got a cabin with a wood stove, a privy out back and not much else in the way of amenities, but for now it suits him fine.

Todd is trying to get his head together and figure out his next move, when a master villain (pick one) decides to enlist his aid in some big criminal scheme. This could be anything from breaking into the vault of one of the most secure jewelry stores in New York to holding a city for ransom with a radioactive "dirty bomb." Whatever it is, it's dangerous and dubious and he wants no part of it. So the master villain has sent a particularly vicious super-assassin (pick one—Lady Deuce from the book "The Bad Guys" would be ideal, as would the White Hand) to go up into the woods and bully Captain Skumbag into the deal. Someone calls the Captain on his cell phone and tips him off. He in turn tips off the Player Characters. Why is Captain Skumbag luring them into the woods with an offer of where to find the White hand (or whatever super-killer you're using)? Can he be trusted? Does he sincerely intend to retire?

3) Once a Skumbag…

Captain Skumbag has tried to retire a couple of times, but it's not as easy as he thought. Every time he attempts to leave the supervilain game, some old foe or former employer tries to track him down and kill him before he can turn state's evidence or tell a reporter all their secrets. It's beginning to look as though he's going to have to fake his own death in order to do pull this off. His sleazy lawyer contacts the Player Characters, and asks if they would be interested in participating. In exchange for their help, the Captain is willing to give them heaps of information about his former employers and comrades. A lot of it is even true. He wants a hero's death—something that involves having a last second change of heart and rushing into a burning building or explosion to try and rescue somebody, but apart from this his ideas are vague and muddled. Frankly planning has never been his forte. Perhaps the Player Characters can think of a plan? Whatever they put together, just before they give it a try, scary guys in black suits and ties turn up in the vicinity and start asking suspicious questions about Captain Skumbag and the PCs. The Player Characters don't run into the men in black face to face, but it does seem as though some arch-villain may have somehow gotten wind of what they're up to. This plot element is really just here to build tension. The fake death goes off without a hitch, and Captain Skumbag vanishes. But a year later he's gotten really bored. Reports reach the PCs of somebody very much like Captain Skumbag running amok in the Philippines (or some equally remote place), on a one-man wave of crime. Just before they investigate, Captain Skumbag's former lawyer gets in touch. Todd Treadwell has just contacted him, and asked him to let the PCs know that if they reveal that Captain Skumbag is still alive, he in turn will have no choice but to reveal their complicity in his escape. That's all the lawyer knows. The Captain hasn't been his client for the past eight months and he has no idea where the man is. As an added twist, perhaps it isn't really Captain Skumbag who's running around the far east committing crimes. Perhaps it's an imposter, and perhaps the real Captain Skumbag tried to warn the PCs away from the Philippines because he intends to come out of retirement and finish off the imposter himself.

SELINA THE BEAUTIFUL TEENAGE WITCH

Real Name: Norman Gummidge
PL: 10

"Now, you might want to scream, dear, because this is really going to hurt."

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 12 (+1)
Int: 16 (+3) **Wis:** 18 (+4) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: 1 **Attack Bonus:** 8
Defense: 10 **Toughness Save:** 1
Fortitude Save: 10 **Reflexes Save:** 7
Willpower Save: 10

Skills: Bluff 8 (+11), Craft (Artistic) 7 (+11), Intimidate 9 (+12), Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 11 (+12), Notice 3 (+7), Spot +6, Stealth 7 (+8)
Feats: Defensive Roll 4, Distract, Fearsome Presence 4, Inventor (magical inventions, uses Arcane Lore and Craft skills), Ritualist, Startle, Sneak Attack, Taunt
Powers: Magic 10 (Spells: Animation; Extras: Alternate Powers: ESP, Force Field, Illusion, Mind Control, Neutralize [Only vs. Powers with a magical source], Paralysis, Summoning, Telepathy, Teleportation), Super-Senses 3 (Darkvision, Detect magic, Detect Holy Ground)
Equipment: Iron Hook Forged With the Blood of Seven Murderers on the Night of the New Moon (Melee Weapon, 8 Damage, Extra: Penetrating), Flying Cauldron (Armor 6 Impervious, Flight 10), Usually has some tokens, trifles, talismans and nasty little charms that he has made with his Inventor and Ritualist feats, Headquarters (Medium-Sized; Toughness: 15; Features: Concealment, Defense System [evil spirits will try to do 7 Damage to anyone who tries to enter the headquarters without Selina's permission, their Attack Bonus is 10], Holding Cells [usually take the shape of enchanted closets or even furniture--for example a huge, soft and somehow hungry-looking easy chair which swallows you up when you sit on it], Living Space for up to ten people [although Selina seldom has any willing guests], Power System, Security System [magical wardings, requires an Arcane Lore Roll vs. DC 20 to disable])
Complications: Can't resist an impulse to do something vindictive and cruel, even if puts Selina at a disadvatage or disrupts a plan that's presently in progress
Drawback: Power Loss (Selina can only cast spells if he is able to speak and gesture freely. Selina's spells also do not work in or against any person, place or object that is sacred to the moon or the forces of nature, nor any untouched virgin wilderness, or old-growth forest)
Background: A sneering post-punk warlock who dresses up like a witch from a cheap Halloween decoration. He loves anything cheesy and tacky that has to do with Halloween. Plastic pumpkins and black cats made from cardboard and skulls that light up and sing bad pop songs—the worse it is, the more he loves it. He also likes murder, and pain.

Not really a transvestite, he dresses this way because it shocks and annoys. He loves to shock and annoy people--and to kill them. He doesn't actually love eating people, but it's offensive enough that he does it anyway.

Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch always seems to have some cruel ironic jest on his lips and some petty grievance to avenge. He can hold a grudge for decades, often over things so childish and trivial that his victim has no idea why he has come back to inflict unspeakable harm on them and their loved ones.

It's impossible to get along with

him, even briefly. Almost inhumanly vindictive and spiteful, he can twist any conversation into a fight. While he doesn't believe in anything himself, he's sullen and contrary enough to adopt the opposite position from whatever opinion you express. He's fairly witty, but he'd rather upset you than amuse you. In fact, he'd rather kill you than either. Or better yet, kill a bunch of innocent bystanders.

He seems to enjoy collateral damage and will go out of his way to inflict more of it. He's not a maniac, though (not quite, anyway) and knows when it's time to withdraw from a fight.

What creates someone like Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch? It's hard to be sure, but the source of his pain and anger seems to lie somewhere in his relationship with his mother.

The early 1960s weren't a good time to be a witch. When the neighbors in suburban Cleveland found out what kind of religion Selina's mom was practicing at home, they had the authorities take her little boy away from her. Then they had her committed to a mental institution.

The boy was put in a big disorderly foster home run by religious zealots who beat him savagely for his mother's wickedness. Under their loving guidance he grew to hate his mother more and more. The rest of the world too, but especially his mom. It was her fault he had been sent to this awful place, her crimes he was punished for daily. By the time he was twelve, he was torturing animals and luring smaller children into danger at every opportunity.

In the meantime, his mother had long since used her magical abilities to secure her release, and after years of searching she finally found him. Calling on the power of her Goddess, she arranged for him to escape from the abusive clutch of his adoptive family and to find her at her new home in rural Pennsylvania. He wasn't as grateful as she might have hoped.

For the next ten years he made his mother's life hell in every way he could, spitefully rejecting her goofy optimism, her new age earth-worship and her silly hippie friends. But he learned her secrets as well as he could, waiting for the day he could use them against her. Yet even now, twenty years after he finally betrayed, killed and devoured her, he still seems to be trying to annoy his mother. Even the way he dresses and the imagery he surrounds himself with—it all reflects the ugly stereotypes about witches that his mother hated so much.

She isn't even haunting him—her shade moved on long since. But he can't move on. In all likelihood he never will.

It's a sad story, but does it really explain him? Lots of children suffer through abusive childhoods. Only a very few turn out like Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch. Even if it does explain him, it certainly doesn't excuse him for his many vicious crimes.

Using Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch in Your Campaign: Selina is bad, bad news. This is the evil warlock who other evil warlocks don't want to work with. It's almost lucky that he's so ghastly in a way, since he's cruel enough that it's always distracting him from making any bigger plans. Not a threat to world peace or security, not even very interested in finding ancient relics or increasing his magical powers, he's merely a threat to anyone unlucky enough to cross his path.

He doesn't exactly have a day-job, but his powers allow him to live in a certain minimal level of comfort without any means of financial support. When he isn't wandering the back roads he'll set up shop in a forest outside of town, decking his awful little house with tacky Halloween decorations, pink flamingoes and real human skulls. The interior is always a filthy den, scattered with bones, broken furniture, rusty meathooks and empty bottles of cheap liquor. It looks like a homicidal wino lives here, apart from the cheesy Halloween décor and the huge iron cauldron. Don't under any circumstances let him trick or threaten you into getting into that cauldron.

Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch practices a kind of perverted and corrupt earth-magic. It delights him to warp and mangle his mother's legacy and to hurt the earth she loved so well. He loves to taint

pure places and foul their magic with his own. This is the kind of thing that might bring him into conflict with mystical superheroes.

He doesn't really commit a lot of robberies. Sick and bloody murders are more his thing. He can be hired by other criminals, but he's difficult to work with and prone to picking lethal fights with his employers. The PCs are likeliest to come across him while he's menacing some poor innocent or pursuing some stupid vendetta over a tiny slight he suffered years ago. Yet it's possible that a low-rent master villain who needs a mystic on the team could hire him rob banks and knock over armored cars. He won't be a very good team player, but his comrades will probably find this out too late.

Once the Player Characters defeat Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch, they have made an enemy for life. He'll keep coming back as often as he can, each time with some awful, sadistic new scheme to make them pay. As cruel as he is, he's crafty, too, and prefers to hit targets from a distance, ambush them or strike at their loved ones. This is good for the GM, since it allows you to keep him as a lurking, unseen menace in the background, building the tension as the Player Characters wait for him to strike.

Adventures With Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch: 1) Avon Calling

Zombie Avon ladies start ringing doorbells all across the suburbs. The payment they demand for their dubious cosmetics is unorthodox, to say the least—your husband's blood, the skins of your household pets, the soul of your favorite child. Many housewives refuse to pay, so the Avon ladies offer to let them become distributors, instead, on credit. Any poor doomed woman who agrees gets held down and slathered in toxic makeup until she dies. She then becomes an Avon lady herself.

As with any such multi-level marketing pyramid scheme, signing up new distributors is more important than making sales. For every three new distributors she signs up, or every six distributors one of her distributors signs up, an Avon Lady goes up 1 PL (they start out as PL2). By the time the PCs get involved, there are already 3 PL 6 Avon ladies (Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Simpson and Mrs. Kuntzler) and as many PL 2-5 minions as the GM needs to keep things interesting.

The Regional Sales Manager whom they all swear fealty to, is, of course, Selina the Beautiful Teenaged Witch. He will be holding an Avon Party at his lovely tract home in three days. Everyone will be there. Perhaps the PCs would also like to attend.

Zombie Avon Lady

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 10 (+0) **Con:** 10 (+0)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: 0 **Attack Bonus:** 2
Defense: 2 **Toughness Save:** 0
Fortitude Save: 2 **Reflexes Save:** 2
Willpower Save: 2

Skills: Profession (salesperson) 1 (+1), Notice 5 (+5)
Powers: Immunity 7 (to Aging, Disease, Exhaustion, Poison, Starvation, Suffocation [no need to breathe at all]), Super-Senses (Darkvision, Detect Potential Customers), Super-Strength +4 (Flaw: Limited [does not allow the zombie to lift more than their base carrying capacity, useful only to wrestle opponents]), Strike +2
Equipment: Bag of cosmetics samples
Complications: Totally obsessed with selling Avon and creating more zombies, does nothing else

Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Simpson or Mrs. Kuntzler
PL: 6

Str: 20 (+5) **Dex:** 10 (+0) **Con:** 10 (+0)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: 1 **Attack Bonus:** 6
Defense: 5 **Toughness Save:** 0
Fortitude Save: 0 **Reflexes Save:** 4
Willpower Save: 6

Skills: Intimidate 8 (+10), Profession (salesperson) 6 (+8), Notice 6 (+6)
Feats: Fearsome Presence 4, Improved Grapple, Startle, Taunt
Powers: Immunity 7 (to Aging, Disease, Exhaustion, Poison, Starvation, Suffocation [no need to breathe at all]), Super-Senses (Darkvision, Detect Potential

Customers), Super-Strength 6 (Flaw: Limited [does not allow the zombie to lift more than their base carrying capacity, useful only to wrestle opponents]), Strike 2
Equipment: Bag of cosmetics samples, clipboard showing current sales and how individual reps are doing.
Complications: Totally obsessed with selling Avon and creating more zombies, not capable of spending time or thought on anything else
Drawbacks: Hideous (very common, moderate) -4pts

2) Land of Wide Lawns and Filthy Murder

A stand of trees, sacred to the goddess of the moon, grows in a wooded space between two suburban subdivisions. Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch wants it ruined, ravaged, corrupted and fouled. He can't set foot in it, which makes that difficult.

The local children instinctively love and protect the grove, so as his agents he has selected some of their parents. Selina invited them over to his house for treats and cocktails He let the suitable ones leave alive and served the rest to them for dinner.

The surviving grown-ups have formed a club, which they call the "Filthy Murder Club" and under Selina's influence they have decided to kill one of each living thing in the neighborhood. They do this in the grove on moonless nights. So far they have killed a cockroach, a mosquito, a squirrel, and when the PCs get involved they are about to steal and kill the neighborhood's only pet parrot.

The PCs could stumble over the Filthy Murder Club in any number of ways. Mystically sensitive heroes may sense roughly what is going on here, precognitive heroes may have dreams about a parrot screaming for help and begging for its life. The neighborhoods kids know someone is trying to do something bad to the trees and they've been trying to meet in secret to figure out what to do about it. They might decide to contact the PCs behind their parents' backs. As an extra twist, the PCs might get involved when they hear rumors of a satanic cult of evil kids killing and mutilating animals in some kind of twisted ritual. In fact, the parents in the Filthy Murder Club are using this story as an excuse to crack down on them and keep them from going to the grove.

There are about ten members of the Filthy Murder Club. Most are PL 1 or two, unless the GM would like to add a PL5 cop or ex-special-forces member to their ranks. They aren't intrinsically evil people, but all of them are foolish, weak and cruel by nature. Under Selina's mental influence they're capable of doing anything, even to their own spouses and children.

On one of the twisting streets in the subdivision stands a little tract house that used to be inhabited by a friendly, childless old couple who were like surrogate grandparents to the local kids. They're still there, dead in their living room, staring lifelessly at the television. This is Selina's house now and the PCs will surely find themselves here eventually once they figure out what's really happening.

THE WHITE HAND

Real Name: Adolph Guzman
PL: 11

"Service the target? Liquidate the objective? Euphemisms are for people who feel shame. The men I work for use the word 'Kill'."

Str: 22/16 (+6/+3) **Dex:** 24/16 (+7/+3)
Con: 24/16 (+7/+3) **Int:** 14 (+2)
Wis: 12 (+1) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: 11 **Attack Bonus:** 12
Defense: 10 **Toughness Save:** 10 (7 flatfooted) **Fortitude Save:** 11 **Reflexes Save:** 11 **Willpower Save:** 9

Skills: Bluff 10 (+12), Craft (Artistic) 2 (+4), Languages (English, Spanish), Notice 11 (+12), Stealth 6 (+13)
Feats: Defensive Roll 3, Diehard, Distract, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Initiative, Move-By Action, Sneak Attack, Taunt
Powers: Device (Big Knife [5 Damage; Extras: Affects Corporeal, Mighty]), Enhanced Strength 6, Enhanced Dexterity 8, Enhanced Constitution 8, Immunity 6 (to Aging, Disease, Poison, Starvation and Suffocation [no need to breathe at all]), Insubstantial 4 (Still Vulnerable to Magical Attacks when in Incorporeal Form), Leaping 5, Super-Senses 2 (Darkvision)
Complications: Always leaves his trademark--an imprint of a white hand, at the scene of every one of his crimes, even if to do so would be contrary to his own best interests
Drawbacks: Hideous (very common, moderate) -4pts
Background: It never occurred to Adolph Guzman that he might one day have to watch someone set his daughter on fire. Things like that happened in El Salvador, it was true, but not to people from his social class. Not often, anyway.

The son of a prominent diplomat, he grew up happy and pampered at various embassies around the world. He vaguely wanted to be a cartoonist or perhaps a comedian. Friends knew him as silly, unserious, good-natured and apolitical.

The early 1980s were a grim time for El Salvador. Marxist insurgents stalked the hills and bloodthirsty right-wing death squads stalked the cities. People disappeared every day and mutilated corpses were found in ditches all the time.

When Adolph turned 18 in 1981, his family sent him off to art school in Florida, where college students didn't run the same kinds of risks they did back home. But American colleges have other risks for wayward young men, and within a year he got his girlfriend pregnant. Adolph married her and they both moved into off-campus housing in Miami. He spent the next two years trying to cope with the demands of his classes and with being a father. He shirked both duties badly and spent more and more time hanging around with the staff of the campus humor magazine, the "Dirty Rag."

Adolph's tiny daughter frightened and annoyed him with her fragility and constant, clamoring needs. Relations with his wife were getting strained. Just before his daughter turned two, the university notified Adolph that if his grades didn't improve he couldn't maintain his student visa and would have to go home to El Salvador. By a strange coincidence, that same week he drew the cartoon that would change his life forever.

While he was never political, Adolph did find the movie "Rambo" obnoxious and stupid. He drew a tasteless and bloody satirical comic called "Rambo in El Salvador" which mocked the movie and its cavalier attitude toward warfare. It was an ugly,

mean, poorly-drawn piece, fueled by the frustration and resentment that he felt over school, his marriage, fatherhood and all the other pressures in his life. It probably wouldn't have ever been published if he hadn't been friends with the editors of the Dirty Rag.

Shortly thereafter he got kicked out school for poor grades, his visa was revoked and he found himself hastily putting his family and possessions on a hellishly long flight back to El Salvador and an uncertain future. Exhausted as he was from trying to help comfort a screaming toddler through the interminable flight, he wasn't adequately prepared to explain himself to customs when they found a copy of "Rambo in El Salvador" in his luggage.

In those days a lot of the country's police and border guards were members of the right-wing secret society called the Mano Blanco. The organization had a violent wing—death squads and rogue commanders in the armed forces swore fealty to the Mano Blanco, as did an increasing number of organized crime figures. They killed suspected commies and liberal Catholic priests and people who competed with them for the cocaine trade. It wasn't a good thing to be stopped by customs officers with subversive pinko literature in your bag.

They put the three Guzmans in detention and called the Mano Blanco, which agreed to send a murder team around to dispose of them. But after a few phone calls from Adolph's powerful family the customs officers grudgingly let all three captives out of airport detention just moments before the death squad was due to arrive. They swore that he hadn't heard the last of this, and they were right.

Adolph's father screamed at him for getting into trouble. He screamed back, but he desperately needed his father's help and accepted his offer of financial assistance. He found an off-campus apartment for his wife and daughter, and was about to enroll in classes when the Mano Blanco caught up with him. They broke into his apartment, tortured his wife and little girl in front of him for a while, set them on fire and then shot him in the head. The neighbors claimed not to have seen or heard a thing during the whole two-hour ordeal.

No one really knows why some people get a chance to come back from the dead. Why should poor weak, wayward Adolph Guzman have had the chance to rise from his grave and seek revenge against the Mano Blanco when so many thousands of other victims did not? Perhaps it was because he spent his last thoughts weren't of himself, but of his daughter, whom he hadn't loved enough? We cannot say. But we can say that he did rise, and that he rose angry.

The gods of vengeance offered him the same deal that they have, on isolated occasions, offered others. He could walk the earth just long enough to kill everyone connected with the murder of his loved ones. Then he would return to his grave, and rest.

But the men who ran the Mano Blanco and its many feuding chapters kept themselves carefully isolated from the street-level troops, so finding them was going to be tough. He was going to need to know the organization pretty well to figure out who to start killing. So he joined the Mano Blanco. Over the next few years he served them as a parahuman assassin, killing students and peasant leaders and people who had offended the wrong families. On two separate occasions he had to kill friends from his former life—both students who worked for the wrong campus publication. He killed diligently, ruthlessly and without question, desperate to gain the trust of the higher-ups and be allowed into their circle. Once he found himself killing a little girl no older than his own daughter had been when she died, and was surprised at how little guilt he felt.

In the Mano Blanco everyone's loyalty was suspect, only the guys who were willing to commit the most startling atrocities could really earn trust. It was three years before Adolph even knew the names of any of his bosses, or learned anything about the organization's structure. By then he was one of the most feared men in El Salvador. They called him "the White Hand" and spoke that name in whispers.

Then, in 1986 he suddenly learned the name of the hit team that had killed

him. The Ventana Avengers, they were called. He had worked with them before. Out of the five of them, three were already dead (one in a drunken knife fight over a girl, one from chronic alcoholism and one in a conflict with another Mano Blanco faction) and one was in prison in the US for attempted rape.

The remaining one, Arnoldo "Moco" Cruz died very entertainingly over a long period of time, once the White Hand got him alone. Before he expired, Moco revealed the name of one of the bosses who issued the death order. Colonel Marcos Steissner.

Adolph spent the next year working his way into Colonel Steissner's good graces until he was finally allowed to meet with the man in person at his palatial home in Miami Florida. Alone with the Colonel in his office, the White Hand debated various ways to kill the man. He knew a lot of them by now, and it was hard to pick. So many lovely ways... and come to think of it, once he finished getting his revenge, he would never be able kill anyone ever again. It would be off to whatever black mysteries await us beyond this world—no more blood, no more screams, no more frantic pleas for mercy. And he couldn't kid himself, if there was a Hell then he was surely going there. Adolph had already been tortured once, and he didn't like it at all. Much better to give than to receive, when it came to torture. So he gave up his quest for revenge, and instead became Colonel Steissner's personal assassin.

These days the insurgency in El Salvador is long since over, the country's wounds are healing and the greatly reduced Mano Blanco is more of an organized crime network than a counter-revolutionary terror group. The White Hand serves their interests, protecting their drug smuggling operations, killing their competitors and generally making himself useful any way he can.

Laid back and cruel, he makes friendly conversation with his victims and rarely takes offense at anything anyone says to him. He never gets vengeful if someone cuts him off in traffic or jostles him on the sidewalk or for that matter points a gun at his head. Nor does he run around harming civilians when he isn't on missions. It's possible to be his friend, although he'll betray you the first moment it is to his advantage. He still draws cartoons sometimes.

Using The White Hand in Your Campaign: The White Hand works best as a paid assassin—the terrifying hired muscle whom a mastermind or crime boss might bring in from out of town to deal with the PCs once they become a nuisance. He seldom initiates crimes on his own.

His bosses can send him all over the world with a diplomatic passport on their bloody business and the PCs can encounter him just about anywhere. From time to time the Mano Blanco hires him out to other organized crime groups or even super-villains. While murder and terror are his specialty, he can also be hired to do bodyguard work or to break a fellow criminal out of prison. While he doesn't normally participate in crimes like bank robbery, there is of course a first time for everything.

No atrocity is beyond him, but he never goes out of his way to commit them. He'll do whatever foul thing he thinks a mission requires, but he won't risk the mission's success in order to inflict more harm on someone. There are plenty of other people to hurt, and there's plenty of time to do it in.

Adventures With the White Hand: 1) Twilight of the Gods

In the dark days of the early1980s, while the Mano Blanco was killing any left-wing intellectuals or subversives they could get their hands on, the Salvadoran superhero team called the Ultimadors decided that the time had come to get out of the country. They were never particularly political themselves, but they fought the cocaine trade and they weren't part of the Mano Blanco's network, so things began to get hot for them. They helped a lot of innocent people escape El Salvador as their final heroic act. In latter years it made them feel less like they had abandoned their country.

For a long time the five surviving members of the Ultimadors have lived

quietly in America, living ordinary lives. None of them have used their powers to fight crime in more than twenty years and they're all beginning to feel their age now. None of them are any stronger than PL9 these days. Unfortunately, their greatest test is just about to arrive.

A new leader has come to power in the American wing of the Mano Blanco. Theobaldo Azul is very young, prone to violent headaches and a bit of a crazy right-wing fanatic. He wants the Mano Blanco to take a more active hand in hunting down former dissidents and he intends to start with the Ultimadors. Why bother with five civilians who were never revolutionaries and haven't been active in years? Because his father tried to have them hunted down, and failed. In this way, Theobaldo will honor his Papa.

The five survivors are the Golden Jaguar (an Indian woman who gained the ability to transform herself into a half-human jungle beast with the help of a magical potion that she no longer has access to), the Whip (a hooded vigilante who struck terror into the hearts of the underworld and stood up for the downtrodden with his incredible whip-wielding skills) Mesmerista (who could cloud the minds of men with her psychic powers and sometimes tell the future), Senor Zero (who could turn invisible and walk through walls) and the Iron Mask (a superhuman wrestler who drew his strength from an enchanted mask).

The PCs are called in when Senor Zero turns up horribly dead in his apartment, in a newly gentrified part of their home city. While investigating his death, the police discover a secret room with his trophies, mementos and old superhero gear. This looks like a super-crime, so the PCs get roped in to help solve it. Someone has painted a white hand on the wall above Senor Zero's body. There are many other clues as to what happened here and some investigation will turn up the unhappy story of the Ultimadors.

The White Hand found out Mesmirista's secret identity from Senor Zero before he died and she knows all the others. The PCs will have to hurry to save her and they may already be too late. Once she dies, he'll stalk the others at his leisure.

Senor Zero was a tax-preparer in his secret identity. Some of the other Ultimadors have done better for themselves and some have done worse. Mesmerista runs a tiny psychological consulting firm and has trouble paying her bills. She lives in a tract home in the suburbs with her second husband, (he's a probate attorney), and her three kids. Her powers are well-suited to fighting off the White Hand, so he's going to hit her from ambush.

Golden Jaguar has prospered in selling real-estate to the Salvadoran-American community and has a penthouse apartment downtown with her mother, who she managed to smuggle out of El Salvador. She's almost helpless without her potion.

Iron Mask hurt his back moving furniture some years ago and lives on disability. He's an affable fellow, although he does have a problem with alcohol. He will put his magic mask back on and bravely make a stand against the White Hand when he comes to call, but his injured back will betray him and he'll almost certainly die.

The Whip still fights for justice on behalf of his fellow Salvadorans—he's a struggling lawyer and community activist. Alone out of all the Ultimadors, he has kept in fighting trim (despite his thinning hair and spreading gut) and may prove a surprisingly difficult target for the White Hand. He's also a hard guy to get along with, doesn't like Anglos much and will initially try to refuse the PCs' help.

For his part the White Hand has been staying at the Salvadoran Legation in the PCs' home city, sheltered by a sympathetic attaché. His diplomatic passport does not give him the ability to kill people in broad daylight (El Salvador would surely waive his immunity for really serious public crimes) but it does shield him to some degree from things like search and seizure, having to show up for court dates and so forth. Nor can the PCs legally search an embassy for him, or hold him in custody if they snatch him from an embassy's grounds. The authorities are severely hampered by these restrictions, so it looks like saving the Ultimadors will be up to the

PCs.

2) This Time, It Isn't Personal

Colonel Steissner dies of a heart attack in his sleep. The White Hand is surprised to find that this hasn't killed him as well. The last person responsible for the death of his wife and child is dead—this should end his time on earth. But the gates of Hell refuse to open for him. What can be wrong?

At first he thinks that because Colonel Steissner didn't die by violence, it didn't fulfill the conditions of the curse. That would be good news—it would free him to kill and ruin and destroy things forever. But in fact that's not it at all. The truth is that one member of the "Ventana Avengers" is still alive. He was their driver that night, and Adolph never saw him. He's a killer and a loser and a drunk named Ygnacio Diaz and he's gotten himself in serious trouble.

Ygnacio has lived in the United States for the past ten years. He makes his living fishing and sometimes washes dishes. He's killed about six people since he got here, mostly on impulse when he happened to feel mean. Five years ago he killed the drummer in an all girl punk band when he saw her walking down the street at night. There was nobody around to see them and he figured what the Hell, why not kill her? Who's ever going to know? Now they have his DNA from a DUI arrest, and they know. He's on death row as we speak, and he's made a lot of enemies there.

The White Hand finds out most of this by going through General Steissner's files. The rest he learns with an Internet search or two. Then he tries to break into the super-maximum security prison where Diaz is being held. The PCs get called in as the nearest available superhero team once the prison comes under parahuman assault. What is the White Hand's objective? Which prisoner is he looking for and what will he do when he catches him?

If the White hand has a tough time breaking in, he'll adopt a different tactic. He knows that there is a parahuman detention facility in this particular prison, so he abruptly breaks off his assault, vanishes, and then surrenders himself to the PCs a few days later. He explains that he wants to waive his diplomatic immunity and stand trial for his many crimes. While they are transporting him, he may tell the Player Characters his whole back-story.

Once in detention, the superhuman restraints seem to hold him, but in fact he's just pretending to let them. His powers are mystical in nature and it's hard to construct a cell that can hold him. While he's awaiting arraignment, he slips through the wall and goes looking for Diaz, letting out as many supervillains and other criminals as he can along the way.

By the time the PCs arrive at the prison to stop him, a full-scale jailbreak is in progress. How are the PCs to find and stop him in the midst of all the chaos?

If the White Hand does ever manage to get Diaz out, he will maim all his limbs and keep him in a wheelchair under constant sedation, tucked away in some isolated place where he'll stay out of trouble.

DOCTOR SCORCH

Real Name: Seymour "Sparky" Sanders
PL: 12

"The world is on fire, the air's full of screams and the Doctor is in!"

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 12 (+1) **Cha:** 8 (-1)
Initiative: 2 **Attack Bonus**:10
Defense: 10/6 Flatfooted
Toughness Save: 3 with armored costume/ 2 without costume **Fortitude Save:** 8 **Reflexes Save:** 7 **Willpower Save:** 3

Skills: Craft (chemical) 11 (+12), Escape Artist 9 (+11), Knowledge (tactics) 11 (+12), Notice 8 (+9), Stealth 9 (+11)
Feats: Distract, Dodge Focus 4, 5pts of Equipment, Evasion 2, Improved Aim, Improved Critical (with Blast power), Precise Shot
Powers: Blast of Flame 12 (Extras: Area, Selective; Power Feats: Alternate Power [Disintegration 6], Homing, Indirect, Precise), Deflect (All Ranged Attacks) 12, Element Control (Flame) 12, Fatigue 8
Equipment: 1 pt of armor (Costume), 4pts Sensory Protection Goggles (visual)
Complications: Compulsive pyromaniac
Background: He's not really a doctor, he's quick to say, just a creepy little pyromaniac with a bad case of attention deficit disorder. It is unusual to find a pyromaniac who has this much of a sense of humor about himself, but then again it's also unusual to find one who can set fires with his mind.

Doctor Scorch is a pyrokinetic--which perfectly suits his personality and hobbies. Unlike many people with his ability, he isn't immune to the effects of his own powers and is covered with small burn scars from various accidents.

Not exactly a career criminal, in that he makes no money from his crimes, Doctor Scorch burns things purely for the sheer twisted joy of it. His favorite targets include odd or eccentric looking historic buildings, big tacky fiberglass statues used to advertise stuff, and anything that looks like it would be really tough to burn. He's grown adept at seeing what a particular structure would look like on fire, and he's become quite a connoisseur.

Most pyromaniacs set fires to hurt and dominate people, but Doctor Scorch just likes watching things burn. He actually tries hard to keep people from getting hurt by his obsession. While he is excited by all the screams and running around that a fire produces, he gets no thrill from burning people. Alas, the nature of his obsession makes it difficult for him to keep from hurting innocents, and despite his best efforts he has caused more than one death over the years. If an orphanage is unlucky enough to be situated in a really beautiful old building, look out!

He's aware of how bad his

compulsions are, and that it would be better for everyone if he were locked up again. Yet he honestly can't control the urge to burn things. Nor can he really suppress the urge to be free, since he can't burn things when he's in custody. It is lucky for him that his powers are easy to suppress. Otherwise they would have lobotomized or killed him long ago. As it is, a simple combination of anti-hallucination drugs keeps his powers in check, although it also gives him the shakes and messes up his fine motor coordination.

By now he has spent about two thirds of his life institutionalized. They made the mistake of releasing him only once, but he does have a disturbing tendency to get loose during the periodic mass prison breaks that super-prisons and mental asylums seem oddly prone to.

Rueful and self-deprecating, he is clearly ashamed of the stuff he does. When confronted, he'll greet the PCs by name and say something like "Gee, I'm kind of glad you guys are here. I sure screwed up this time."

His attention deficit disorder is clearly visible. Manic and excitable, he can never keep still, his hands and eyes are always moving and he makes big wide gestures as he speaks. A chronic fidget, instead of doodling or biting his nails, he sets things on fire.

He wears a costume, not only because he needs as much protection from the heat as he can get, but because he finds it really exciting.

While he does want to be stopped, he won't go down without a fight. Doctor Scorch prefers not to hurt his opponents too badly, so instead of attacking them directly he will try to undermine whatever they are standing on, drop burning trees on top of them and so forth. He is as adept at figuring out how a fire will behave as any fireman, and can launch indirect attacks with great precision. He won't directly take hostages, but if cornered he's not above setting a nearby building or vehicle on fire so that the PCs will have to leave him and go rescue whoever is inside.

Using Doctor Scorch in Your Campaign: Doctor Scorch is a good recurrent opponent for less experienced superteams. The nature of his powers and his habit of putting lots of innocent lives at risk makes him capable of holding off a much bigger group of heroes that his PL would indicate. A Doctor Scorch plot-arc is usually pretty simple. Escape, rampage, get locked up, repeat as needed.

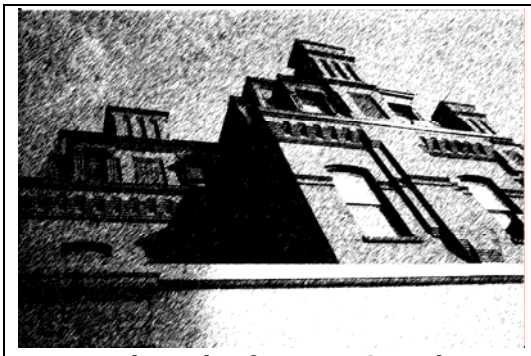
Things can suddenly get a lot more complicated if Sparky Sanders ever remembers who he really is. In fact he's the living incarnation of the trickster-fire-god. The thing the ancient Norse called "Loki." He has a mother and a father here on earth, he was born, rather than falling from the sky, but he's Loki all the same.

If some other reincarnated Norse god ever recognizes him (and it's not certain they will—that's entirely up to the GM) then Sparky will suddenly become a PL 16 energy projector, with roughly the same powers that he has now jumped up to a higher level, and he will get a whole lot more ambitious. If the GM wants, Loki may be interested in things like ruling the world or blowing it up, but he's more likely to want revenge on any other surviving Norse deities.

His personality won't change, although he'll get both craftier and more self-confident. He likes to burn things even more, but he's better at keeping the impulse under control (buy off the weakness with some of his extra points).

If you would like to use this plot thread, but the god Loki already plays another role in your campaign, then Doctor Scorch is his son. He can still undergo a sudden leap in power and change in objectives once he figures this out, as above.

Adventures With Doctor Scorch 1)
We're Going to the Zoo, Zoo, Zoo…



The Lair of Doctor Scorch

Dr. Scorch walks out of his mental institution during a power failure. He isn't really sure where to go or what to do with himself, so he starts setting things on fire. First, he torches a big creepy-looking mansion (it houses the offices of a corporate law firm, if your players want to know) and takes up residence in the burned-out ruins. Then he settles down to think.

Unfortunately, his lair is not far from the zoo, and he can hear the animals at night. To his horror, he finds himself irresistibly drawn to the idea of burning it down and listening to the animals die. This thought is terribly upsetting and weirdly fascinating to him. He resolves to get caught before he gives in to it.

It's not in Doctor Scorch's nature to just turn himself in to the police, although he tries. He stands on the sidewalk in front of a police station, pacing back and forth for nearly ten minutes before a cop asks him what he's doing there. He panics and runs away. Once this fails, he tries another approach. He burns down a condemned building and scorches the words, "Please Stop Me!" into a wall nearby. Then a few nights later he burns down a giant pile of tires at a junkyard. His next target is a riverboat casino, which is being remodeled at the dock (no one is on board). Then he'll burn up a huge grinning fiberglass cow that stands over a local milk distributor.

At each crime scene, he leaves a clue as to his next target. His ADD won't let him wait for more than a few minutes at the scene for someone to come catch him, so he tries to tip the PCs off in advance.

This is a precarious line for him to walk. He wants to get arrested, he doesn't want to harm anyone, but he has to keep burning things to keep his pyromania satisfied or he'll give in and torch the zoo. This is so frustrating for him that if the PCs don't catch him after a few tries, he'll call them on the phone and try to warn them (obliquely, with hints) of where his next target will be. If they engage him in conversation, he'll actually explain the whole thing. But if they get into any kind of in-depth dialogue with him, he gets too excited for his tenuous self-control to hold him back any longer. He explains this, regretfully, and the PCs will have to race across town to try and intercept him before he reaches the zoo.

Whenever the PCs confront him in person, he acts apologetic and ashamed, but he will do his best to fight them off—he finds the prospect too thrilling to resist.

Perhaps the most dangerous way of all for the PCs to attempt to capture him is to attack him unexpectedly in his lair. The partially-burnt building is a death-maze of unstable floors, support beams on the verge of collapse, stairways that will cave in if stepped on and so forth. Doctor Scorch is familiar with all these hazards and he will try to use the terrain to his best advantage. If taken by surprise he may also lash out with more deadly force than he normally uses, frying a superhero without really meaning to. He'll feel sorry if this happens, but that probably won't be of much comfort to his victims.

2) Glory and Pain, Cusswad and Scorch

The Hand of Pain and Glory breaks Doctor Scorch and another, lesser supervillain (#$&*@!! The Cusswad Man would be ideal, but use whichever low-powered villain you like) out of confinement. No one knows why he has done this. Neither one of them seems like they would be of much use to him, or indeed to anyone. But then again no one has ever understood the Hand of Pain and Glory's motivations. See Page 31 to learn more about this enigmatic, terrifying superhuman marauder.

The minor villain turns up dead in a

dumpster within a week, but Doctor Scorch's whereabouts remain unknown. If the PCs visit the haunts of the underworld and shake down some stoolies, they find that no one on the streets knows anything.

Then, Doctor Scorch suddenly attacks a waterfront carnival. When the PCs arrive, he greets them cheerfully and says that he's glad to see them. There isn't much time, he says, so he'd like them to listen carefully. Then he explains what's really going on.

The Hand of Pain and Glory broke Doctor Scorch out of stir to create a distraction while he robs a charity auction across town. Robbing a charity seems really wrong to Doctor Scorch, so he's decided to screw the plan up. He's pretty good at screwing things up—in fact it's his only really talent, he chuckles. He didn't want to end up like @#$% (or whichever minor villain the Hand broke out of prison) so he had to wait until just now, while the Hand is getting ready to rob the auction and doesn't have time to come kill him. Dr. Scorch is attacking the wrong target ("That guy actually wanted me to burn down an orphanage!" he notes with distaste) and he's going too early, so if the PCs hurry they ought to be able to catch the Hand of Pain and Glory in the act.

If they think to ask why the Hand killed his other henchman, Doctor Scorch tells them readily enough. The other guy was supposed to create another diversion. The reasons the Hand killed him depends on which villain you're using. If he was a hopeless untrustworthy goof-up like #$&*@!! Then the Hand killed him for being incompetent. If he was anyone else, the Hand killed him because he had some moral qualms about robbing charities and burning down orphanages. In either case, it sent a strong message to Doctor Scorch. He's trying to screw things up in a way so that the Hand can't be entirely sure that it was intentional, but even so he would very much like to return to the safety of his imprisonment.

The PCs now have a choice to make. Do they believe Doctor Scorch? Do they stay and fight him, knowing that there's no time to waste? Can they afford to divide their forces if they're about to go up against someone as tough as the Hand of Pain and Glory? If one of the PCs knows a lot about organized crime, mention that this carnival is owned by the Mafia (Doctor Scorch doesn't know this), and see how that complicates their decision-making.

If they tell Doctor Scorch to go turn himself in, he looks nervous and says that he'll try. He's tried that before and screwed it up, but this time he thinks he can do it.

If the PCs let him go, he does in fact attempt to surrender to the police. Unfortunately, one of the arresting officers is a crooked cop named "Big Chuck" O'Ryan who works for the very same mob guys who own the carnival, and he attempts to kill Doctor Scorch on the spot. The Doctor flees, wounded, convinced that he's made his best effort.

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, the Hand of Pain and Glory prepares to rob a charity auction. He's so focused on the task at hand that the PCs will take him almost completely by surprise.

Reverend Strange

Real Name: The Right Reverend Ezekiel Strange
PL: 12

"With the Lord's help I can free you from the shackles of existence and release your soul unto an eternity of wondrous, happy torment."

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 18 (+4)
Initiative: 1 **Attack Bonus:** 8
Defense: 9 **Toughness Save:** 4 **Fortitude Save:** 4 **Reflexes Save:** 6 **Willpower Save:** 12

Skills: Intimidate 12 (+16), Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 7 (+9), Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) 2 (+4), Notice 6 (+11), Perform (Oratory) 12 (+16), Stealth 6 (+7)
Feats: Distract, Fascinate, Startle
Powers: Immunity (Aging, Cold Environments, Disease, Hot Environments, Starvation, Suffocation [no need to breathe at all]), Insubstantial 4 (Still takes damage from Magical attacks), Invisibility 8, Magic 12 (Spells: Neutralize [only vs. powers with a magical source]; Extras: Alternate Powers: ESP, Mental Blast, Summon, Teleportation), Mind Control 10 (Power Feat: Mental Link; Extra: Conscious), Telepathy 10
Complications: Obsessed with vengeance, Doesn't understand the 21st Century at all.
Drawbacks: Disabled (Functional Illiterate, can barely read, and can make no sense at all of things written in 21st century dialect; Minor, Common)
Background: A frighteningly proper and polite Victorian Satanist, who once stalked the plains of the Old West, spreading carnage, havoc and woe. It took a desperate alliance of the 19th century's greatest heroes to send his soul down to perdition, and he took more than one of them with him. Now the Right Reverend Ezekiel Strange walks the earth once more and who can save us now?

Obsessed with vengeance, he clawed his way up out of Hell to show his enemies the burning glory of his wroth. Unfortunately, they're all long dead, so he will have to content himself with raining destruction down on their descendants. He wants them all to die, but first he wants them to see everything they love fall into ruins. He wants them to know shame, humiliation and bitter hopeless grief.

This may take him a while to accomplish, for he has no idea how the 21st century works and no desire to learn. He can of course kill their friends and household pets, or set their barn on fire, but he'd also like to have them arrested for awful crimes or watch a cause that they believe in fail.

With no idea how to accomplish anything that subtle, he'll probably make some kind of alliance with another villain, offering to aid them with some evil project of their own in exchange for their assistance.

Using Reverend Strange in Your Campaign: The Reverend Ezekiel Strange works best as a personal nemesis for a

player character whose family has produced adventurers for generations, or one who has inherited the mantle of some hero from the distant past. He'll start in on them slowly, with threats and ominous dreams, then start to attack the people close to them. Perhaps he'll fall in with another villain who will try to make the PC's life miserable in subtler ways. One of Strange's favorite tricks is to send a character some hideous dream and then let them find his boot prints in the dust outside their window when they wake.

In person he is an eerie presence, always unctuous and polite in a peculiarly 19th century way. Never rude, he speaks largely in pious platitudes even while he is torturing someone to death. He doesn't breathe, and if you look hard you can faintly see through him. While he does quote Scripture, the passages he recites seldom have anything to do with what is going on, and are often weirdly at variance with his behavior.

While Reverend Strange is well educated for an itinerant 19th century preacher, he's surprisingly ignorant by the standards of most 21st century occultists. He learned his craft from the witch women of the Tennessee hills and voodoo priests on the Bayou, not from reading books. He does not know that the earth goes around the sun and he's never heard of William Shakespeare. While he knows much of the Bible by heart he can barely read.

In combat he relies heavily on his power to call shambling horrors up from the abyss, but he has plenty of other tricks if he needs them

Adventures With Reverend Strange: 1) Book Club of the Damned

Ezekiel Strange awakens, eager for revenge and unsure how to get it. After a few bewildering encounters with the modern world, he realizes that he's going to need help navigating its weird and treacherous paths. He falls in with Selina the Beautiful Teenaged Witch, perhaps the only person in existence who could actually manage to be a bad influence on him.

Selina has a plan, and there's a perfect place for the Reverend in it. Selina has made his new home in a conservative suburb where a large number of Christian fundamentalists live. It's the kind of place where the nearest adult bookstore is miles away and burned down mysteriously just after it opened. He grabs a local grade school administrator named Abigail Tidely, and makes her his slave. Under Selina's mental domination, Mrs. Tidely gets access to the school psychologist's files and gives Selina the names of all the happiest and best-adjusted children (Selina wants to do as much harm as possible, so it's better to hurt nice, carefree, happy kids). Not very many of them are from "Christian" families, which happens to dovetail neatly with the plan.

Selina sends Reverend Strange out to harass and terrorize these children and their families. He'll appear in their backyards, on the playground or at the mall and ask the kids if Jesus Christ has saved them. He gets increasingly ominous and threatening with each appearance, and he'll start telling the kids and their parents that he's going to take the children away to his Sunday School far off in the woods, where a beautiful lady will instruct them.

No one but the people he is harassing can actually see the Reverend. The police scoff at the parents, their neighbors start to wonder about them.

Two of the families the Reverend is menacing are Hindu and one is Jewish, which increases their sense of isolation as the local authorities refuse to do anything about the problem. Finally the terrified parents bring in the Player Characters to protect their kids.

If the PCs talk to the neighborhood children, they can get a good solid lead almost immediately. Everyone in school knows that Mrs. Tidely, the fat, talkative, kindhearted "Office Lady" has been getting in terrible accidents at her book club meetings. Every week she comes to work missing another body part.

Selina the Beautiful Teenaged Witch hosts Mrs. Tidely's book club in a burnt-out adult bookstore some miles away. Mrs. Tidely doesn't realize that her fellow book club members are corpses and half-melted blow-up dolls and doesn't think it odd that they're studying books like "The King in

Yellow" and the Marquis de Sade's "Justine." At each meeting Selina cuts off another one of her parts, cooks it and eats it. She's already missing three fingers, a foot and one eye by the time the PCs meet her. She has no idea how she can keep getting in all these accidents, but she likes the book club all the same.

Completely unaware that anything unpleasant is going on, she'll happily lead the PCs to her next book club meeting if they ask, where they can surprise the Reverend and the Witch just as they prepare to make off with the children and sacrifice them to who-knows-what awful, unclean gods.

Here are some stats for Selina's latest (and most fabulous) creation.

Animated Blow-Up Love Doll (Lightly Toasted)
PL: 3

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 10 (+0) **Con:** -(n/a) **Int:** - (n/a) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: 0 **Attack Bonus:** 3
Defense: 3 **Toughness Save:** 3 (+0 flatfooted) **Fortitude Save:** n/a **Reflexes Save:** 2 **Willpower Save:** 2

Skills: Notice 5 (+5), Stealth 8 (+8)
Feats: Defensive Roll 3, Diehard, Fearsome Presence 3, Improved Grapple, Sneak Attack, Startle
Powers: Immunity 30 (all Fortitude effects)

2) Vengeance is Mine, Saith the—Wha?!

Ezekiel Strange performs some ugly favors for the Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch. In exchange, Selina explains to him where the descendant of one of his old 19th century foes can be found. The GM should invent a hero from the Old West with a costume and powers much like one of the PCs. They also had the same last name.

Unfortunately, this is all just a coincidence. Selina doesn't really know where any of the Reverend's targets live and if he did, he wouldn't tell him. Instead he just picked someone who looked like a good match.

The Reverend appears below the PC's window at night, clouding their dreams with horror. He will start to stalk their loved ones, next. However, in the course of tormenting them from afar, he lets them know his motives for destroying them. If they can prove to him that they really aren't related to anyone he ever fought, he won't quite know what to do next. He's so weird and otherworldly that the Player Characters may not realize just how shaken and baffled he is. But in fact he's completely knocked for a loop, despite his creepy and unwavering smile. Utterly flummoxed and bewildered, he'll betray Selina's location to the PCs and vanish.

Selina the Teenage Witch presently resides in a condemned building that was once a home for wayward boys, before it was shut down for lack of funds. He loves the way misery seeps out of every crack in its decaying walls, the way children's' tears have watered every inch of its sagging floors. He has decorated the halls so that it always seems to be Halloween there, and taken up residence in the headmaster's office.

When they track him down, Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch will gleefully tell them what he did to the poor old Reverend, and explain just how naïve and incapable of coping with the modern world the old fool really is.

Once Selina is wounded enough to be easy prey, Reverend Strange suddenly appears and attacks everybody, anxious not to be cheated of his vengeance against the one who deceived him. Whether the PCs leave these two monsters to destroy each other is entirely up to them.

3) Tales From the House of Phelps

Thoroughly sick of the 21st Century, frustrated in pursuing his vengeance at every turn, Reverend Strange reassesses his approach, and comes up with an entirely new plan.

Back in his own epoch, there was a mysterious sorcerer named Cadmaeon Phelps, who lived in a windowless house on a fog-shrouded island in Puget Sound. Phelps claimed to be the keeper of a doorway through time, which led to some distant point in the future. If Ezekiel Strange can find Phelps and his weird,

windowless manse, he might be able to escape this benighted epoch and return to his own time, where he could wreak vengeance on his enemies directly, instead of contenting himself with their descendants.

Phelps is long dead and his house has been razed to make way for the large and tasteless mansion of an aerospace tycoon. But the doorway is still there, buried inside a wall behind one of the upstairs bedroom closets. Sometimes faint creaking sounds from Phelps' wooden house in the 19th century come faintly out of the wall (although you'd have to be standing in the closet to hear them).

Word reaches the Player Characters of an evil haunting at a mansion in Puget Sound. If any of them have fought Reverend Strange before, they know at once that it's him. What is he up to? Then, just as they're getting ready to investigate, they are contacted by a lawyer from a venerable San Francisco firm. One of the firm's early clients, a Mr. Cadmaeon Phelps, left a set of documents with instructions to deliver them to the Player Characters on a certain date in the 21st century. It was an eccentric request, but the firm obeys its clients without question. The lawyer is amazed and a little awestruck that the instructions actually worked. Mr. Phelps knew just where to find the PCs on this particular day.

The papers explain the whole story, (although Phelps is pretty vague about how he found the doorway through time in the first place and why he's protecting it—but these secrets don't matter for the adventure at hand). By looking into the future Phelps has seen that Reverend Strange is going to come through the door into his house, that he will fight the Reverend valiantly but that he will lose and die, and that the PCs will then come through the door in hot pursuit, just a little too late to save him. He has left the PCs maps, equipment, and everything he knows about Reverend Strange's targets in the 19th Century, hidden in a secret room.

It's off to the Wild West for the PCs, to stop Reverend Strange before he destroys their past. But they're going to have to be careful not to affect the past too badly themselves!

We're leaving the specifics of what they find in the 19th Century purposefully vague, so as to let it fit your campaign history better. Was the Wild West the home of mad scientists, hooded master criminals and supernatural evil? Did masked avengers ride the plains, upholding the law and dealing out two-gun justice? Or was the 19th century a more sedate time, before the age of superheroes? Is it cartoonish and dirt-free, like a B Western from the 1950s, or is it gritty, smelly and real, like "Deadwood" and "Unforgiven"? That's up to you and your particular campaign style.

We're also going to leave the question of time paradoxes relatively open, to give you more flexibility. Ideally the PCs should be cognizant of and worried about changing things too much through their intervention, but you don't want them to freak out over every blade of grass they crush. Of course, being able to monkey with the continuity like this could also create some opportunities for an enterprising GM. This could be a good excuse for the GM to adjust some element of their campaign world, by letting the PCs "accidentally" modify history a little. Call it a continuity update. Having them worried about changing the past is an excellent way to make the PCs act with more restraint in a world where virtually everyone has a vastly lower PL than they do. There may actually be a couple of PL 10 gunfighters or Indian shamans out there somewhere, but there probably aren't guys in the Old West who can shoot laser beams out of their eyeballs and leap tall buildings with a single bound. Unless of course, the GM decides that Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill and the rest of the legendary folk heroes from America's tall tales were real...

Although he's already dead by the time the PCs arrive, on the next page we have some stats on Cadmaeon Phelps, in case you need them, as well as a generic cowboy and a PL10 Anti-Hero.

Cadmaeon Phelps
PL: 9

Str: 8 (-1) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 12 (+1) **Int:** 18 (+4) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: 3 **Attack Bonus:** 8
Defense: 8 **Toughness Save:** 1 **Fortitude Save:** 5 **Reflexes Save:** 5 **Willpower Save:** 9

Skills: Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 10 (+14), Knowledge (Current Events—of the Twenty-First Century!) 8 (+12), Languages (Spanish), Notice 6 (+11), Performance (Oratory) 10 (+13), Profession (teller of creepy tales) +9, Stealth 7 (+10)
Feats: Fascinate, Ritualist
Powers: Magic 7 (Spells: ESP, Illusion, Summon, Teleportation, Telepathy), Super-Senses 8 (Darkvision, Detect Invisible Astral Presences, Time Sense, Precognition)
Equipment: Headquarters (Size: Small; Toughness 15; Features and Powers: Concealment [forever shrouded in mist], Dock [it looks ancient and rickety but is in fact perfectly solid], Isolated Location [at least it was isolated in the 19th Century, before the Seattle suburbs spread out this far], an alchemical Laboratory, a first rate occult Library, Living Space for up to 9 people, Security System [the spirits that haunt the house come tell him if there are any intruders, Arcane Lore Roll vs. DC 20 to disable this feature and sneak inside undetected], Super-Movement [Temporal Movement; Extra: Portal; Weakness: Limited, Time portal only leads to one period]), Rusty Shovel (Melee Weapon, 3 Damage).
Complications: Forbidden to ever leave the House of Windowless Rooms.
Background: Phelps likes to accost astral travelers and tell them scary stories he's observed from his studies of the future. PCs may actually have encountered him before in their dreams and heard some of his "Tales From the House of Windowless Rooms." He's not a bad fellow, though—just a little peculiar (and prone to overusing the phrase "heh-heh-heh!")

Generic Wild West Gunfighter/Cowboy
PL: 5

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** 12 (+1)
Int: 10 (+0) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: 7 **Attack Bonus**: 6 **Defense:** 6
Toughness Save: 5 (+1 flatfooted)
Fortitude Save: 5 **Reflexes Save:** 5
Willpower Save: 5

Skills: Climb 5 (+6), Intimidate 3 (+3), Handle Animal 5 (+5), Notice 8 (+12), Profession (Cowboy) 5 (+5), Ride 7 (+10), Stealth 7 (+10), Survival 7 (+10)
Feats: Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 1 (5 pts. of equipment), Improved Aim, Improved Critical (With pistol), Improved Initaitive, Quick Draw, Sidekick (Horse), Track
Equipment: Pistol (Ranged Weapon, 3 Damage), Survival Gear, Horse

The Two-Gun Kid
PL: 10

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 16 (+3)
Int: 14 (+2) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: 14 **Attack Bonus**: 8 (10 with pistols) **Defense:** 10 (5 if unable to Dodge)
Toughness Save: 8 (+3 flatfooted)
Fortitude Save: 10 **Reflexes Save:** 10
Willpower Save: 5

Skills: Bluff 10 (+13), Climb 5 (+6), Intimidate 3 (+6), Handle Animal 5 (+5), Notice 9 (+12), Perform (Singing) 3 (+6), Perform (Stringed Instrument) 4 (+7), Profession (Cowboy) 5 (+7), Ride 7 (+10), Stealth 7 (+12), Survival 7 (+10)
Feats: Ambidextrous, Attractive, Attack Focus (Pistols), Defensive Roll 5, Dodge Focus 5, Equipment 1 (5 pts. of equipment), Fearless, Improved Aim, Improved Critical (With pistol), Improved Initaitive 2, Quick Draw, Sneak Attack, Startle, Taunt, Track, Uncanny Dodge
Equipment: Two Pistols (Ranged Weapon, 3 Damage), Survival Gear, Horse
Complications: Trigger-happy sociopath, desperate to be liked.

THE 50,000 VOLT PHANTOM

Real Name: Philbert Skutch
PL: 13

"You're crazy. You need shock treatment."

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 18 (+4) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 6 (-2)
Initiative: 2 **Attack Bonus**:13
Defense: 7 **Toughness Save:** 4
Fortitude Save: 4 **Reflexes Save:** 4
Willpower Save: 5

Skills: Craft (electronics)12 (+16), Disable Device 14 (+18), Knowledge (technology) 14 (+18)
Feats: Fearless

Powers: Deflect 13 (Energy Attacks; Extras: Action, Reflection, Redirection; Flaws: Only Works on Electrical Attacks), Electrical Control 13 (Extras: Area, Selective Attack; Power Feats: Alternate Powers [Auditory Dazzle, Visual Dazzle], Indirect), Flight 8, Nullify 15 (Electrical powers, electrically powered equipment and devices; Extras: Nullifying Field, Selective), Strike 13 (Extra: Aura), Super-Senses 2 (Detect Electromagnetism in a 360 degree redius)
Complications: Obsessive collector. Will do anything to pursue his all-consuming hobby.
Drawbacks: Hideously disfigured (very common, moderate) -4pts
Background: A petty, obsessive, alienated control freak who commands the forces of the lightning. Imagine the worst, strangest, most angry and impossible ham radio enthusiast you've ever encountered. Now make him weirder, more obsessed with trivia and harder to deal with. Now give him the power to shoot lightning bolts out of his eyeballs. That's the 50,000 Volt Phantom.

An electrical engineer by training, Philbert Skutch was always a fiend for juice. He built electric chairs in his garage that would give him bigger and bigger non-lethal jolts of electricity, and one night he finally went too far, slamming himself with a pulse that should have killed five or six men. It felt like rapture. It felt like paradise.

As his soul hung there on the verge of the afterlife, the Gods of the Lightning came to him. They were impressed with his sacrifice and wanted to reward his devotion. He returned to his body, horribly burned but able to control electricity.

Badly disfigured by the accident that gave him his powers, Philbert blames his mutilated face for his inability to fit in with normal society. This is missing the big picture, to put it mildly, but then again the big picture has never been his strong suit. In fact anyone who gets to know him at all will find that his scorched face is the least of his unappealing features.

The 50,000 Volt Phantom pursues a weird collector's hobby, stealing relics of Edison, Tesla, and the other pioneers of Electricity. His enemies tend to misunderstand the nature of his interest and

assume that he's either searching for some kind of incredible lost scientific secrets, or that he somehow derives his powers from these objects, like a kind of electrical shaman. In fact he's just an obsessed fan. He loves their machines best of all, but he's just as likely to try stealing Edison's old coffee table or a pair of Alexander Graham Bell's socks.

Extremely trying company, he knows all kinds of incredible things about electricity, but he won't stop talking about the subject and he'll get dangerously agitated if he senses even the faintest disagreement. Constantly correcting people, he'll never let up on someone if he thinks they're wrong. Even if they admit that he was right, he'll keep berating them about it and may become violent.

Using the 50,000 Volt Phantom in Your Campaign: A supernatural master villain with a very specific focus, the 50,000 Volt Phantom works best for the most kind of traditional superhero adventure—an arch-villain wants to steal some valuable object and the PCs must foil his sinister scheme. His choice of objects is a little peculiar, but he still fits this basic model.

While he's not especially interested in hurting people, he can become incredibly vindictive over tiny matters. Philbert never really tries to hit anyone with lethal force, he just wants to punish them or get them out of his way. However, he also doesn't care very much if they die.

He won't torture people for information and it won't occur to him to take hostages. Apart from this, he has no limits. He'll hit people who are weaker than he is without hesitation, he'll hit targets in the back, he'll hit opponents who are already trying to surrender, if he's annoyed with them.

When he attacks a site, his first move is almost always to shut down its electrical power and plunge it into darkness. He knows an amazing amount about electrical engineering and has an encyclopedic knowledge of the function and stress tolerances of most electronic components, which makes it easy for him to use his powers to cause whatever kind of blackout his plan requires.

When he isn't stealing things, he spends a lot of time on the internet discussing the history of electrical appliances and trading trivia with other obsessed collectors. Woe to the hapless nerd who insults him or contradicts him in this arena. He isn't above hunting them down in real life. Most of all he hates guys who claim to be the 50,000 Volt Phantom in order to intimidate other guys on the discussion boards.

Because of the high-profile targets he attacks, he's famous out of all proportion to the level of threat he actually presents. He is personally responsible for the Department of the Interior closing the Edison Lab National Historic Site, and relocating its collection elsewhere. The Alexander Graham Bell Museum in Nova Scotia waits nervously for his first assault. The papers revel in his exploits and paint him as a mad genius bent on who-knows-what kind of sinister electric mayhem. Whenever the PCs go up against him they should know in advance that this is an infamous arch-villain of the first rank (this helps build extra suspense). The truth is far sadder and shabbier, but then again isn't it always?

Adventures With the 50,000 Volt Phantom:

1) Tesla's Ghost

The 50,000 Volt Phantom gets a lead on some artifacts of the strange electrical pioneer Nikolai Tesla—including his schematics for some kind of death ray! A software billionaire named Wilbur Schenk has just acquired them and he can't resist dropping a boastful hint about it on one of the Early Electronics discussion boards. He regrets it almost at once, and when he looks into the matter a little more carefully, he finds that he has cause to panic. The person who goaded him into dropping the hint signs onto the board as zzzzyyx423@zzzzyyx.net This is almost certainly the same person who used to post as both 426225124423@8166.net and zapz4all@zapzap.net Anyone who ever insulted or provoked a fight with either of

those posters has since been attacked by the 50,000 Volt Phantom. It seems all too likely that zzzzyyx423 is the Phantom himself, and that he will be coming for Tesla's death ray soon.

Which brings Schenk to something of a personal crisis. He is desperate not to be taken for a nerd. He dresses in black, he wears a ponytail, he has hired an actor who resembles him but looks cooler to impersonate him in public. If he reveals to the authorities that he spends his time posting on shortwave radio and early electronics boards, the image he has built so carefully will be shattered. So instead he brings in the Player Characters. If they confront him about how selfish and childish this is, he whines that they don't understand just how rich a guy like him has to be before quality women will even look at him.

Schenk has an isolated, ultra-high-tech estate on an island off the coast or Oregon, full of amazing electronic gizmos that will be worse than useless once the 50,000 Volt Phantom shows up. And the Phantom is in fact on his way. He doesn't care about the death ray (which doesn't work anyway) he's after Tesla's eyeglasses. *"For this will prove to everyone on the boards that the guys who claim the Smithsonian has the glasses are fools! The hour of retribution is at hand! Mwa-ha-ha-ha-ha!"*

2) The Phantom Strikes at Midnight

The moment that the Alexander Graham Bell Museum has long feared is now approaching. 125 years ago, Bell founded his private laboratory on one of the hills above where the museum now stands. It would be almost impossible for the 50,000 Volt Phantom to resist making an appearance at the anniversary. He didn't have his powers yet when the lab turned 100 years old and this is the first major anniversary he has had a chance to attend. No doubt he has something extra-special planned to mark the event.

Desperate for help, the museum asks the Canadian government for aid, and they in turn request international assistance (or alternatively, if they're not the kind of team who would get called in to assist the Canadians, they figure all this out for themselves and decide to lay a trap for the Phantom on their own).

The museum is located in an odd place, outside the tiny resort town of Baddeck in Nova Scotia, by the Bras-d'Or Lakes. It's a remote location, off in the woods, hundreds of miles away from the nearest large city. Stark looking mountains loom above the cold deep water of the lake, few cars are seen on the road. Baddeck itself is a one-lane town of bed-and-breakfasts and quaint gift shops; just a dot in the wilderness.

The museum is located some distance out of town, up a winding road through the trees. It's a low, wide, sprawling one-story brick building, with an amazing collection of artifacts from Bell's varied life and career spread leisurely down a number of meandering halls.

Few people realize the full scope of the man's work. You can see displays of the phonetic alphabet he invented for the Iroquois Indians and photos of a heroic looking young Bell in full ceremonial headdress being initiated into their tribe. You can see the "photophone" which transmitted the sound of the human voice through the air on a beam of light, decades before the invention of radio. You can see the innumerable flying machines he invented and tested on Bras d'Or lake and endless photographs of the older Bell playing with his grandchildren on the beach. His pioneering work on genetics is profiled as well. On one wall, without any caption or explanation, hangs a statue of an enormous goat's head.

Outside the museum one can gaze up into the forbidding hills and see a rocky promontory jutting out into the lake. The Bell family still owns that entire stretch of land, and their mansion is up there somewhere, in the forest. Bell's last granddaughter, Alberta, now in her 90s, still goes there every summer, sitting in the huge house above the lake by herself. Bell's tomb is up there too, in a circle of giant sycamore trees, at the highest point on the promontory.

Guarding the big, spread-out museum may pose certain logistical

challenges. Hundreds of strange and obscure artifacts are on display. Which one does the 50,000 Volt Phantom intend to steal? Where should the PCs concentrate their forces?

The GM should make an effort to build tension as the fateful hour approaches. Use the wild and somber landscape, with its deep dark lake, brooding forests and constant drizzling rain to convey a sense of menace. Ideally the PCs should be jumping at every shadow by the time the Phantom actually does show up. In the middle of the cold, wet night, a blazing figure flies past high overhead. The PCs can only glimpse him intermittently with the heavy cloud cover, but he seems to be coming in for a landing at the museum. Then he suddenly changes course and gains altitude. He's heading for the high, forested spit of land where the Bell mansion supposedly lies. Does he intend to attack the mansion and do some terrible harm to poor Alberta Bell?

Instead he will land at the highest point on the promontory, among the giant sycamores, and attempt to place a single rose on Bell's tomb. The Phantom will then stand in silent reverie for a minute or so (-4 to any rolls he makes to hear or spot Player Characters sneaking up on him). He will not be pleased to have such a private moment interrupted.

THE HAND OF PAIN AND GLORY

Real Name: Larry Stickle (previously Russell Wayne Boone, and before that Tyler Strang)
PL: 14

"Plan?! We walk in, we take the money, we walk out. And we kill a lot of people. A whole lot of people, if we're lucky."

Str: 14 (+2) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 16 (+3)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 16 (+3) **Cha:** 16 (+3)
Initiative: 2 **Attack Bonus**:13
Defense: 14 **Toughness Save:** 14 with Force Field, 3 without **Fortitude Save:** 8
Reflexes Save: 8 **Willpower Save:** 6

Skills: Bluff 8 (+11), Gather Information 6 (+8), Intimidate 10 (+13), Knowledge (Streetwise) 9 (+10), Notice 4 (+7), Profession (Bank Robber) 4 (+5), Search 5 (+5), Sense Motive 6 (+9)
Feats: All-Out Attack, Move-By Action, Power Attack, Sneak Attack, Startle, Taunt
Powers: Device 36 (Eye of Rage and Splendour, conveys the following powers: Blast 15 [Extras: Area, Selective], ESP 10 [Visual and Auditory], Flight 10, Force Field 14 [Extras: Impervious, Selective], Dazzle [Visual] 15, Immunity 9 [Life Support], Mind Shield 10, Sensory Protection 5, Super-Senses 3 [Danger Sense, Darkvision])
Background: In the summer of the year 2000, the world watched in horror as a supervillain attacked the Olympic Games in Atlanta, killing dozens of spectators before being driven off by the combined efforts of a superhero group and three members of the Turkish Olympic weightlifting team. The so-called "Hand of Pain and Glory" vanished in the aftermath of the attacks, and one of the largest manhunts in American history has still failed to find him, five years later. There was speculation that he might have sought refuge with a white supremacist gang or other anti-internationalist group somewhere in the Pacific Northwest, but no such link was ever proved. Frankly his motives for attacking the games remain mysterious. The remarks he made at the scene didn't reveal any kind of political agenda—he was just raving about how powerful he was and how wonderful it is to feel anguish and pain.

DNA samples taken at the scene of the crime don't match anyone in the federal government's files, so whoever he is, he hasn't been arrested in the last ten years and may not have any criminal record at all. To add to the government's annoyance, he has resurfaced no less than eight times since his disappearance. Each time he robs a bank and vanishes again. There is no geographic pattern to these attacks. He has hit banks everywhere from Glendale Arizona to Portland Maine to suburban Chicago. He's coming to the Player Characters' home city next.

The truth about the Hand of Pain and Glory is much stranger than the authorities suspect. His powers derive from an artifact called "The Eye of Rage and Splendor," which he carries in his fist. It's a little like a gemstone, although its lines meet at impossible, brain-punishing angles and it pulses with a dull red light.

It's unclear where the original Hand of Pain and Glory found the Eye (to make it easier to work into your campaign's deep background) but it slowly drove him insane. His name was Tyler Strang. A survivalist from Idaho, Strang was a member of a tax-

resistance militia called the "Invisible Army of the Lord." Not a white supremacist himself. Strang was more of an anti-taxation kook with a head full of conspiracy theories about the Federal Reserve. A hermit, he didn't live in the Invisible Army's compound. While he turned up at their meetings he largely kept to himself.

Some time in late 1999, as the Invisible Army prepared itself for the Y2K bug to destroy the world, Tyler Strang presented himself to the Army's leader, Harmon White, and demonstrated his superhuman powers to him. White was delighted and deeply impressed—his Army now had an honest-to-God superhero in its ranks. And just in the nick of time! The Y2K bug was about to annihilate civilization.

A few months later the world had failed to end and the Invisible Army of the Lord was in a state of collapse. In fact the whole Militia movement was in upheaval—the world hadn't ended. The Y2K bug was a joke. Their leaders had been wrong. People had sold their farms and stockpiled guns and in some cases killed themselves and/or their families and it was all for nothing.

Harmon White desperately struggled to keep his group together, but nothing could stop the inevitable. He had made them look like fools. By midsummer he had lapsed into a drunken, suicidal depression and begun driving away the few friends he had left. His second in command, a career criminal named Russell Wayne Boone, stuck by him, but that was because Russell was a wanted man and had nowhere else to hide.

White chased off Tyler Strang in a drunken rage, but Tyler determined to remain loyal to the cause. By summer he came up with a plan that would be sure to bring the Army back together—something no one would ever forget. The Olympics were right at the center of the Internationalist Conspiracy, plus the place was sure to be crawling with dirty foreigners. Tyler would destroy this symbol of Internationalist Treason and show the world that valiant America was too wise to be deceived by the One World Government. He wanted to tell Harmon White about his plan, but by this stage Harmon would talk to no one but Russell.

For his part, Russell seemed intrigued and he assured Tyler that they would hide him in their half-deserted compound once he brought the Olympics to its knees. After Tyler staggered back to Idaho, beaten and bloodied, Russell was as good as his word. He shot Tyler in the back of the head and buried him next to Harmon White under the compound's privy. Then he took the Eye of Rage and Splendor for himself.

Russell was a full-time supervillain for the next three years. He used to hide out in the decrepit Idaho compound when the heat was particularly fierce, but for the most part he just lay low in his old criminal haunts, staying with one or another gang of robbers and drug addicts until he ran out of money. Then he would rob another bank. Nobody ever betrayed his whereabouts, mostly because everyone was terrified of him. Last year he got murdered in his sleep by a guy who owed him money, so for the past eighteen months or so the Hand of Pain and Glory has been a maniacal, hair trigger killer named Larry Stickle.

Like Russell, Larry kept the name and costume of the Hand of Pain and Glory, because he likes the notoriety it brings. If he makes up his own supervillain identity, then he's just another new super-criminal struggling to get his career started. But if he doesn't change anything, then he's the Hand of Pain and Glory, one of the most feared men in the country, who has made fools of the federal authorities for years.

Larry pursues more or less the same lifestyle as Russell, although he has found to his surprise that there are plenty of people all across the country who sympathize with the attack on the Olympics, see the Hand of Pain and Glory as a hero (he killed a lot of foreigners!) and are willing to give him shelter. It's considerably safer to hole up with some farm family for a few weeks than it is to live in a crackhouse, so he prefers to lodge with ordinary folks as much as possible.

Larry is a gracious house-guest, but this is where his good nature ends. Even for a professional criminal he's vicious. He takes hostages and he kills them for kicks,

he wantonly slays innocent bystanders, he tells people that he's not going to hurt them and then blows enormous holes through their bodies the moment he sees the relief dawn on their faces. Gratitude is completely foreign to him, as is friendship. If you do him a good deed, he'll think you're trying to manipulate him and he'll get enraged. If you reach out to him he'll see it as an opportunity to abuse you.

He loves being a supervillain and loves making grandiloquent speeches about the joy of pain and the beauty of destruction. While Larry isn't an educated guy, and doesn't really have the vocabulary to pass himself off as an evil genius, he is getting pretty good at sounding like some kind of mad prophet of anguish. And the more he talks like that, the more he feels like one. The Eye of Rage and Splendor is helping him along, making him crazier and meaner and feeding his incipient megalomania.

Using the Hand of Pain and Glory in Your Campaign: You should always present it as a major event when the Hand of Pain and Glory shows up again. Everyone will want to fight him, the authorities will mobilize all their resources to stop him. He's also a mystery, and the GM should play this up as well. A major threat without a grand master plan, he can turn up anywhere at any moment, whenever you would like to shake up the campaign. Because anyone can use the Eye of Rage and Splendor , you can have someone else take up the costume and completely change the Hand of Pain and Glory's tactics and objectives just as the PCs start to unravel the mystery (see "Joe Postal" on page 6 for an example of this). In his current incarnation, he's more focused on his own survival than on things like revenge, so he probably won't serve as a recurrent nemesis. Frankly, after the 2000 Olympics, he's the whole world's recurrent nemesis.

Adventures With the Hand of Pain and Glory: 1) Attention Morning Commuters

The Hand of Pain and Glory has run out of money yet again, and decides that it's time to go get some more.

Robbing armored cars is difficult, compared with robbing banks. It's tough to intercept them on the road, the guards always put up a fight, and once you have one, it's hard to find a secluded place to break into the lockbox in back. The Hand has conceived an audacious plan that neatly solves all of these problems. He learns that an armored truck is going to be passing over a major bridge at around ten in the morning—the very same time that a garbage scow (or other big barge, depending on what your campaign city is like) passes underneath it. At that moment he will swoop down from the sky, knock the truck off the bridge and drop it onto the barge. He can then commandeer the barge and open up the truck at his leisure.

Luck is with him, at least at first. The day of the heist, a thick fog closes in over the bridge. If it's the wrong time of year or the wrong kind of climate for heavy fog, then there is either a rainstorm or a snowstorm, whichever the GM thinks would be more appropriate. But as the Hand of Pain and Glory closes in on the bridge, a Player Character spots him (or gets alerted while listening to the police radio channel or in some other way finds out) and an aerial chase ensues. Try to give Larry enough of a lead and make the weather conditions fierce enough that he can reach the bridge before the battle ends.

Once he engages the truck and the Player Characters on the ground, things get dicey. The bridge isn't completely packed with cars at this hour, but there is some traffic and it's moving really fast. The Hand of Pain and Glory shows no concern for the bystanders at all, and does his level best to knock the truck off the bridge, as cars smash and spin into one other all around him. Multiple-car traffic accidents pile up across the bridge and more vehicles keep screaming in out of the fog (or rain, or snow, or whatever the GM is using to obscure the scene). Without some quick action on the part of the Player Characters, this is going to turn into a bloodbath very quick. But they can't let the Hand of Pain and Glory get away with the loot, either.

2) The Hills are Alive With the Sound of Pain and Glory

There is finally a major break in the Hand of Pain and Glory case. Idaho state police are have found the empty, overgrown remains of the Invisible Army's compound and they stumble across the graves of Harmon White and Tyler Strang. While doing DNA tests on the bones, they find to their amazement that one of them is a match for the man who attacked the 2000 Olympics. But these bones are five years old, and the Hand of Pain and Glory has been seen at least eight times since then.

While investigating the story of the Lord's Invisible Army, one of the detectives vanishes, never to be seen again. The authorities in Idaho get really alarmed and call in both the feds and the Player Characters. For the current hand of Pain and Glory has got wind of their investigations, and while he doesn't know much about the matter himself, he's sure that it will bring the authorities one step closer to him. And that of course cannot be allowed to happen. As the hunters close in on the truth, he in turn is closing in on the hunters.

This scenario works best if you keep the villain lurking in the background for most of it. As the PCs help investigate the case, play up the harsh and forbidding mountain terrain, the suspicious locals and the danger in the air.

The PCs will find that while local people are willing to talk to them, and the sad strange story of the Invisible Army of the Lord will come out bit by bit, a surprising number of the people they talk to openly sympathize with the Hand of Pain and Glory's attack on the Olympics. Even seemingly nice, ordinary folks are willing to tell the PCs all about the "One World Government" and their fear of internationalism. After a few encounters like this, the PCs may well suspect that they are being stalked by some kind of backwoods secret society, but in fact just the Hand of Pain and Glory himself.

3) Glory Bound

A street person called Ethanol Jake timidly approaches the PCs. He knows people say he's crazy and sometimes he is, but he knows what he saw last night—he was thinking clearly and he wasn't drunk. The Hand of Pain and Glory appeared on a rooftop over the alley where the poor frightened bum was trying to sleep. He stared at something for a long time. Then he vanished. Jake is really worried. If the Hand of Pain and Glory is plotting something, people are going to die.

PCs who investigate Jake's story will find something interesting. If they stand on that same rooftop and look in the direction Ethanol Jake suggested, they see the back of a run-down currency exchange shop. Tomorrow is the first of the month—the store's usual patrons will all be there to cash their paychecks and the exchange will have stocked up on cash to prepare for it. Could this be a chance to catch one of America's most wanted criminals in the act?

The next day, at seven in the morning, just as the exchange opens, the Hand of Pain and Glory walks across the street and approaches the storefront. The PCs will almost certainly be able to hit him by surprise. But there is a surprise in store for them, too. When they capture the Hand of Pain and Glory, it swiftly becomes apparent that his DNA doesn't match that of the man who attacked the Olympics. In fact he has an iron-clad alibi—he was in prison at the time! To make matters worse, the PCs hit him on the street, before he had a chance to commit any crime. He claims that he was just walking across the street and had no intention of robbing anybody. The only witness who can confirm that he was casing the joint ahead of time is Ethanol Jake, and his testimony is less than compelling, considering that his hobby is drinking rubbing alcohol.

Larry Stickle wants the PCs brought up on charges for assaulting him, he threatens to sue them and he claims that the Eye of Rage and Splendor is his personal property and demands to have it back. The courts won't actually pursue charges against the PCs and the lawsuit goes nowhere (he can't even find a judge who's willing to issue a restraining order against the Player Characters, despite the fact that they beat him up in broad daylight). The city

authorities refuse to give him back the Eye of Rage and Splendor even though they have no legal justification for hanging onto it. Then, as he leaves the city courthouse after filing yet another motion, a vigilante stabs him to death right there on the steps.

What happens next depends on the PCs relationship with the media and the city government. If they are popular and well-connected, then their career is almost unaffected by the ensuing scandal. If they have enemies in the press and city hall, or if they are already outlaws, then there is a massive backlash against vigilantes and things get really bad. In either case the PCs will have a chance to redeem themselves. A crooked cop steals the Eye of Rage and Splendor from an evidence locker and attempts to sell it to the highest bidder. The PCs get word of the impending underworld auction. Can they break it up in time? Or will the Hand of Pain and Glory rise again?

Generic Thugs for an Underworld Auction
PL: 2

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 12 (+1) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 8 (-1) **Wis:** 8 (-1) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: 1 **Attack Bonus:** 2
Defense: 2 **Toughness Save:** 2
Fortitude Save: 2 **Reflexes Save:** 2
Willpower Save: 0

Skills: Intimidate 5 (+5), Knowledge (Streetwise) 5 (+5), Notice 3 (+2), Sense Motive 3 (+2)
Feats: Connected, Quick-Draw
Equipment: 9mm Handgun (Ranged Weapon, 3 Damage)

Here's one possible successor to Larry Stickle—a version of the Hand before he fully learns how to use the Eye's powers. If he isn't tough enough to challenge your PCs, use Larry's stats instead.

New Hand of Pain and Glory
PL: 9

Str: 28/12 (+9/+1) **Dex:** 12 (+1)
Con: 14 (+2) **Int:** 12 (+1) **Wis:** 12 (+1)
Cha: 10 (+0)
Initiative: 1 **Attack Bonus:** 9
Defense: 9 **Toughness Save:** 9 (2 without Force Field) **Fortitude Save:** 6 **Reflexes Save:** 6 **Willpower Save:** 6

Skills: Profession (Any--but he's probably a crooked police officer or an underworld boss) 3 (+4)
Feats: All-Out Attack, Power Attack
Powers: Device (Eye of Rage and Splendor [Can be taken away only when the wielder is incapacitated]: Enhanced Strength 16, Energy Blast 9, Force Field 9, Mind Shield 8)
Complications: Being driven slowly crazy by the Eye of Rage and Splendor

Contessa von Blut

(aka the Red Contessa)

Real Name: Her Grace, the Graffin Erzabet von Blut
PL: 19

"Why Mr. Harker, you seem to have mislaid your crucifix. In the interest of fair play, I shall give you a moment to locate it before I rip out your throat and drink your fine hot English blood. Still can't find it? Well, what a shame. Give my regards to your sweet little wife. No, wait--don't bother. I shall tender them myself. But first, a little refreshment to reward my exertions..."

Str: 18/34 (+12/+4) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** - **Int:** 12 (+1) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 24 (+7)
Initiative: 15 **Attack Bonus:** 19
Defense: 19 (+15 flatfooted) **Toughness Save:** 19 (+15 flatfooted) **Fortitude Save:** n/a **Reflexes Save:** 18 **Willpower Save:** 19

Skills: Bluff 6 (+13), Intimidate 11 (+18), Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 4 (+5), Knowledge (History) 3 (+4), Notice 19 (+24), Stealth 19 (+22), Survival 10 (+15)
Feats: Attractive, Defensive Roll 4, Distract, Dodge Focus 4, Fascinate, Fearless, Fearsome Demeanor 5, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Initiative 3, Minions (the number of minions available to the Contessa varies, but once she's been able to establish herself in an area she can have up to 110 PL1 vampires under her control, as well as a gang of 11 PL2 non-vampiric gangsters for daylight operations, with 6 tougher PL 3 thugs on call and 3 PL3 Lieutenants, she will also likely have 2PL 5 greater vampire servants and a PL 6 vampire lord as her second in command), Move-By Action, Power Attack, Startle, Takedown Attack, Taunt, Tracking, Trance
Powers: Animal Control 10 (Extra: Mental Link; Flaw: Limited [Works only on wolves, bats, rats and sharks]), Drain Constitution 8, Flight 8 (Flaw: Limited [Only Works at Night]), Enhanced Strength 16 (Flaw: Limited [Only Works at Night]), Immunity 30 (all fortitude effects), Insubstantial 2 (Assume Gaseous Form), Mind Control 12 (Extras: Conscious, Mental Link, Subtle; Flaw: Limited [only works on targets who can see her eyes, or who have had their blood drained by her]), Morph 2 (Can assume the form of a wolf or a bat; Flaw: Limited [Only works at night]), Protection 15 (Extras: Impervious; Flaw: Limited [vs. holy, silver, or magical weapons. See the Description of her Drawbacks below to see what qualifies as “holy”], Regeneration 5 (Resurrection; Flaw: Limited [Does not work if she has been beheaded or impaled with a wooden stake]), Teleport 8 (Flaw: Limited [Only Works at Night]) Weather Control 8 (Hamper Movement with rain and wind; Extras: Alternate Powers [Dazzle Visual and Auditory Senses with thunder and lightning, Obscure with fog] Flaw: Limited [Only Works at Night]), Strike (Claws and fangs) 5 (Extra: Mighty), Super-Movement 1 (Wall-Crawling), Super-Senses (Darkvision, Enhanced Hearing [Accurate, can determine precise location of things that she Notices with her auditory senses], Scent [Extra: Enhanced Sense, Scent is Accurate as well as Acute], Tracking Sense [scent])

Equipment: Headquarters (Castle Blut; Size: Medium; Toughness 10; Features: Combat Simulator [the so-called "Garden of Sorrows" where illusions torment anyone who ventures inside], Holding Cells in the dungeon, Isolated Location, a Laboratory once used by a mad scientist of the Contessa's aquaintence, which now stands vacant--the Contessa has not bothered to go inside for more than a hundred years, a first-rate occult Library which the Contessa seldom bothers to use, Living Quarters for the Contessa and up to 18 guests, a Security System [Some of the evil bats who hover over the castle will come tell her Grace if anyone intrudes on the grounds, while the rats in her walls bring her news of intruders inside the castle—it takes an Arcane Lore roll vs. DC 20 to get past them undetected], Super-Powers [One room--the Contessa can never remember which one, is so haunted that it exerts a Drain 9 on the Wisdom of anyone who spends the night there; another guest room will attempt to use a Mind Control 15 [Extra: Concious] on anyone who sleeps in it and turn them homicidal; one of the closets will Teleport anything or anyone placed inside into another random closet in the house; the Contessa has a seldom-used mirror with ESP 19 hanging disused in her library, ready to show her visions of the world outside her walls, in the unlikely event that she ever wants to see them; a bathtub in one room will attempt to drown anyone who bathes in it [Suffocation 9]; one of the halls will seem to grow impossibly long and exert a Paralyze 9 [Flaw: can only Slow] effect anyone who attempts to flee down it; a ruined stairway leading up a shattered tower appears to be whole [Illusion 9] until you tread on one of the missing steps; there is a staircase that exerts a Teleport 9 effect on anyone walking down it, taking them back up to the top once they reach the bottom, and thus trapping them indefinitely in an endless loop of stairs; horrendous Illusions 10 stalk the halls from time to time; the doorway which leads to one of the guest rooms will Teleport 9 anyone stepping through it into a much more remote and dangerous region of the castle, a painting hanging on one of the Contessa's walls has the capacity to transport the viewer to the sceneit depicts--this counts as Teleport 9 [Extras: attack, extradimensional; Flaw: Only one location] unfortunately, the painting depicts a dismal nighted plain haunted by ferocious monsters. Other Residents: 40 or so diseased PL 1 bats flutter about the castle's halls, ready to do the Contessa's bidding, while 4 huge and hungry PL 2 hounds stalk the grounds, there are 2 PL 3 ghosts, as well as a PL 4 and a PL 5 ghost wafting about the castle somewhere, but they're often sullen and hostile to the Contessa and can't be trusted not to harm her guests).
Complications: Unfamiliar with the 21st Century and its ways.
Drawbacks: Weakness (dependant on blood, common, minor, -2pts.), Weakness (holy symbols, dazed for one round by losing an opposed Charisma check, common, moderate, -3 pts. Note: "Holy Symbol" is hereby defined as any symbol sacred to the bearer, and not consecrated to the gods of death—a pentagram would work if wielded by a Satanist or Neopagan, as would a hammer and sickle if wielded by a devout Stalinist, but a skull and crossbones in the hands of a necromancer would not), Weakness (Sunlight, minor, per round, destroyed after 12 rounds, -8 points) Vulnerable (to attacks from sharp stabbing weapons made of wood Common, Moderate, -3 pts)
Background: In the sleepy, bucolic mountain province of Syrtia, now part of Hungary, there is an unhappy little valley called Blutwald, where nothing seems to have changed for a hundred and fifty years. The Austrian authorities always avoided this place, as did the Communist authorities who came after them. It does not appear on official maps and can be reached by no paved road. The village is half-empty, the castle at the top of the valley is falling into ruin and the farmers go about with weary, hopeless faces. No orders have come down from the Castle in a century and a half. No orders are required. The Contessa has but one demand of her subjects: they must not leave the valley, for her ladyship thirsts.

This is the realm of the Contessa von Blut. Queen of Shadows. Mistress of the Un-Dead. Monster. Unholy Arch-fiend.

She is all these things, and things more terrible yet. For as Dr. Abraham Van Helsing once observed, the Contessa is an unusual type of vampire. She has a mind, if not a soul (to use Van Helsing's clumsy turn of phrase: "Her brain it is not of the child-type, but of the criminal type!"). She is no mere ravening beast--she can think and plan and plot and scheme. No one really knows how or why the Contessa clings to her ghastly unlife or even how long she has stalked the night. But this we do know—in Blutwald the dead travel fast.

It is not surprising that the Graffin Erzabet's name strikes fear into ordinary Syrtians and Transylvanians for hundreds of miles about her loathly castle. Yet they do not know the half of it. For the Red Contessa is no longer content to slurp the thin blood of her weary subjects. She wishes to spread her shadow across all the world and drown mankind in rich red blood.

The Contessa has tried twice before, and twice the world has rebuffed her advances. During the First World War she was roused from her dim musings by the sweet sounds of violence and the rich smell of blood. The whole continent seemed to be drowning in gore—what was this wonderful new world she had awakened to? She looked around, delighted at the paradise of suffering Europe had remade itself into, and determined to have it all for her own. First she would take over Austria-Hungary, and then send her vampire minions fluttering across the continent.

She was opposed by Herr Doktor Professor Abraham van Helsing, vampire hunter extraordinaire. A tireless crusader against the forces of horror and death, Professor Van Helsing was perhaps the greatest vampire hunter ever to live. But by 1914 he was old, and felt his age. He had begun to forget things, begun to find his mind wandering in circles. It actually amazed him that despite having faced death and eternal damnation so many times, he feared senility so much worse. It was his one great hope to win a final battle before his mind entirely failed. This was not to be. Van Helsing lost a lot of blood as well as his wits fighting the Contessa and was committed to a lunatic asylum in Budapest. But not before his young companions had gravely wounded the Contessa and driven her back to the Blutwald. She swore revenge. But first she determined to prepare herself more carefully to face this strange new world's perils.

The Contessa came out of her castle once more in 1939, smelling blood and death on the air. She worked with the Nazis, in their Department of Special Sciences, and raised a vampire legion to help them fight the Allies. But this plan also failed. The Allies had their own superhumans, Professor van Helsing's descendants plagued her at every turn and she was once more forced to retire to her lair in defeat. This time she determined to be more careful, not to rush into combat before she understood things better.

By the late 1990s it was clear that the world in fact changed faster than her ability to learn about it. By the time she understood the Cold War—poof! It was gone. So she said to the Devil with preparation and began her conquest. By now she has connections in Russian and Hungarian organized crime groups all over the world, and they have arranged to bring her to America. Soon the night will run red, and the joyous sound of screams will echo across the world.

Using the Red Contessa in Your Campaign: The world has largely forgotten about Contessa Von Blut, although there are a few American superheroes who remember her, or at least know that the Nazis had a vampire working with them. They tend to think she must have perished in the Battle of Berlin, for no one has seen her since.

While the Contessa knows people in Eastern European crime circles and while they owe her favors, she is not exactly a crime lord herself. At least not yet. She pursues a much older school of vampiric infiltration—move into a run down area, start making nosferatu, get some minions in the waking world who can protect her lair and interests (probably corrupt cops or eastern European gangsters), acquire some businesses that attract young people and are open late (dance clubs and crack houses, for example) and spread the taint of

the vampire as far as she can.

A gothic villainess of the classic Victorian mold. she sneers, she leers, she taunts wickedly. She has an evil sense of humor and loves to hear the sound of her own voice. If defeated badly, she return for her revenge next week or she may run back to Blutwald and lie low for years. She is vengeful and sadistic, and will pursue lengthy vendettas against people who trifle with her. Yet her chief concern is always staying alive to feed again. This trumps anything else she might want.Despite how utterly evil and depraved the Contessa is, fighting her may actually pose some ethical problems for the Player Characters. Most superheroes aren't used to facing opponents that they actually have to kill. And yet the Player Characters' best option for dealing with Contessa von Blut is almost certainly to pound a stake through her cold black heart and send her withered soul screaming back to Hell where it belongs, and to do it quickly, before she has a chance to lead them onto her home ground. Confronting her in Blutwald is extremely dangerous. Her awful little valley is full of supernatural horrors, many of which she has no command over. There are chambers underneath her tumbledown castle where even she dares not venture.

Adventures With the Red Contessa: 1) Rose of Ashes, Garden of Sorrows

A mystic-powered hero falls in battle, and the GM announces that only a long-lost artifact called the "Rose of Ashes" can save them. Unfortunately, the Rose was last in the possession of famed occult adventurer John Shade, who vanished along with the Rose on a mission for the allies during World War 2. A contact in the federal government agrees to show the PCs the ancient, crumbling file on John Shade's last mission. Part of the information in the file has been blotted out ("redacted" for security reasons) but it seems clear enough that they sent him deep into Nazi Germany, to Blutwald, to gather information on the infamous Contessa von Blut.

The Red Contessa does indeed still possess the Rose, tucked carelessly into one of the books in her library. It looks like an intricately folded origami flower made from black paper. It has the power to bring one person back from the dead—but the Contessa has never wanted to bring anyone back from the dead (nor does it seem likely that she ever would), so she has left it there.

Brave characters may try to slip into Castle Blut and steal it from her. Braver characters may try to confront her and take it from her. *Really* brave characters may try to negotiate with her for it. If they take this last and most dangerous route, the GM should remember that she regards the Rose of Ashes to be almost useless, but that she is bored and cruel and can sense that the Player Characters badly want to have it (unless of course they can somehow convince her that it's not that important to them). In any case, she now knows the PCs, and will suddenly start taking an interest in the world beyond her castle once more.

2) A Little Game of Death

The Red Contessa has grown desperately bored with her existence, and determines to liven things up. She sends invitations (written in blood, *q'elle surprise*) to a number of prominent superheroes and some villains as well, inviting them to Blutwald for a little game of death. The rules are simple, she will hunt them and they will hunt her. If they kill her, she will not hold it against them, for if she catches them she will surely do the same. Characters who have no particular reason to come try to kill her are offered a large financial reward.

More than one supervillain takes her up on the offer, as (presumably) do the Player Characters and a European superhero or two. The other heroes are all just window dressing. The Contessa kills them all on the first night, leaving no one but the Player Characters and a few untrustworthy supervillains for potential allies.

Ideally the cannon fodder heroes should be people the PCs don't know personally, and who seem a little off-putting and difficult to approach. If you don't have any NPCS like this in your campaign, then they are a Spanish monster-hunter and thrill-seeker called the Matador, who has a bad reputation for grandstanding and using excessive force, a French vigilante who calls herself La Belle Noir, who doesn't speak English and constantly says disdainful things about Americans in the press, and the mysterious, silent masked British super-agent called Danger Man, who has actually come to blows with superheroes whenever they interfered with whatever mission he was on. None of them look like good allies initially, but suddenly it doesn't matter. The Red Contessa drinks their blood and kills them all in nasty ways almost immediately—even Danger Man.

Use whichever villains seem best. The scenario probably works better if there are two or three of them, between PL 9 and 12. Kaptain Skumbag would be a good choice, as would the White Hand.

The residents of Blutwald will refuse to give the outsiders any help or aid once they realize why they are here, and the Contessa is a formidable foe on her home ground.

Can the Player Characters make common cause with the surviving supervillains and work together to defeat the Red Contessa? Perhaps as an added complication, the Contessa has also invited a maniacal supervillain like Selina the Beautiful Teenage Witch, who can't be worked with and shows no interest in hunting the Red Contessa, preferring to kill off the other contestants instead.

Dr. Jack

Real Name: Dr. John Seward
PL: 9

From Dr. Seward's Journal: ***"Have awakened once more in Klautzenburgh. Blood loss quite severe this time. Condition very grave. Seems improbable that I shall survive another turn, should the game go against me. Will make arrangements to kill self, in the event that she wins the next round. Death clearly preferable to complete loss."***

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 16 (+3)
Int: 18 (+4) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: 2 **Attack Bonus:** 9
Defense: 9 **Toughness Save:** 3
Fortitude Save: 9 **Reflexes Save:** 7
Willpower Save: 9

Skills: Craft (Mechanical) 8 (+12), Gather Information 5 (+7), Investigate 9 (+13), Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 6(+10), Medicine 9 (+13), Notice 8 (+13), Profession (Psychiatrist) 9 (+13), Search 8 (+13), Sense Motive 8 (+13), Stealth 8 (+10)
Feats: Fascinate, Improved Critical (Wooden Stake), Improvised Tools, Inventor, Trance
Powers: Immunity 1 (to Vampiric Mind Control), Super-Senses 2, (Detect Vampires, Low-Light Vision)
Equipment: Oversized doctor's bag, containing 19th century medical gear and a seemingly endless supply of wooden stakes (5 Damage)
Complications: Completely unable to use modern information technology (computers, cell-phones, pagers, etc)
Drawbacks: Minor Vulnerability to poison and disease attacks.
Background: Professor Van Helsing once headed a formidable team of vampire hunters. There was Arthur Holmwood (Lord of Godalming), one of the Victorian era's great explorers. There was Arthur's friend Quincy Morriss, legendary cowboy and gunfighter from the American west. And there were many others, over the years. The only one left alive is the dubious Doctor Jack Seward, MD, who has either discovered a means to retard his own aging, or else is a corrupted servant of the Red Contessa, befriending would-be vampire hunters and leading them to their doom. Which is he? That's up to the GM.

Seward is a strange, dry man—cool in his passions, detached and scientific, vaguely sinister even if he isn't a vampire. His body is physically about twenty-eight, but he seems much older, or perhaps ageless.

Jack Seward was fascinated by the workings of dementia and by 1890 he had dedicated his life to the study of Abnormal Psychology. He was drawn into the shocking world of the Un-Dead through the strange case of a madman named Renfield. Jack has long since burned the Renfield file and never speaks of the details, but whatever happened, it was enough to convince him that vampires exist.

If he is human, Jack has survived until the present day by injecting himself with vampire blood. It puts him into a sort of suspended animation. He lies in dreamless slumber for decades, hidden under the floorboards of his old hospital.

The next time there is another major outbreak of vampirism and the forces of undeath begin to stir across the nighted face of the world, it calls to the tainted blood in his veins and he awakes.

He's adjusted fairly well to the 21st century (it took him a lot longer to adapt to the 1940s) although he's still a complete novice at personal computers, and has no idea how to send an e-mail or surf the web. He has actually known how to drive an automobile since the 1890s, and finds modern cars easier than their earlier counterparts. His medical skills aren't quite up to snuff for the period, but he doesn't believe in leeches and he knows to wash his hands before performing surgery.

Alas, this will probably be the last battle for poor Jack Seward. The vampire blood in his veins has given him a fatal, wasting anemia that modern science can do nothing to fix. He needs large, regular transfusions of blood and this won't keep him alive forever (if he's really a vampire, then this is just an excuse).

To his astonishment, Jack finds enormous strength and clarity of purpose when he contemplates his impending death. As a physician, he has no illusions about how badly he has damaged his body. He has at best another year of life left in him. He will never grow old, he will never complete his life's work on the causes of psychopathy, he will never write his memoirs or raise a family. Another man might despair at this knowledge, but Jack finds only peace in it. For now he knows that his life has been reduced to a single purpose--the destruction of Contessa von Blut.

The Contessa likes to spread malicious gossip about Dr. Seward. Not only does she actively cultivate the story that Jack is one of her agents, she likes to tell people that Dr. Seward was in fact Jack the Ripper. Whether or not there is any truth to this odious rumor is up to the GM. Jack wearily says that there's no point in denying it—you will believe it or not, trust him or not, just as you prefer, no matter what he says about it.

If Jack is actually a vampire, then in death he retains more of himself than most nosferatu. His compassion, his reverence for science, the careful storehouse of his mind have all been reduced to ashes. Yet his cunning, his patience and his implacable strength of purpose are intact. One could argue that he is far more dangerous than vampires who have stalked the earth for millennia. But soon you will have the chance to judge for yourselves. For Jack thirsts…

Dr. JACK (vampire)

Real Name: Dr. John Seward
PL: 11

Str: 22 (+6) **Dex:** 16 (+3) **Con:** -- (n/a)
Int: 18 (+4) **Wis:** 20 (+5) **Cha:** 18 (+4)
Initiative: 3 **Attack Bonus:** 11
Defense: 10 **Toughness Save:** 9 Impervious **Fortitude Save:** n/a **Reflexes Save:** 8 **Willpower Save:** 9

Skills: Bluff 11 (+14), Gather Information 4 (+7), Intimidate 8 (+12), Knowledge (Arcane Lore 4 (+8), Notice 8 (+13), Sense Motive 6 (+11), Stealth 8 (+11)
Feats: Distract, Fascinate, Fearless, Hide in Plain Sight, Move-By Action, Sneak Attack, Startle
Powers: Drain Constitution 2, Immunity 30 (Immune to all Fortitude effects), Insubstantial 2 (Assume Gaseous Form), Protection 9 (Extras: Impervious; Flaw: Limited [vs. holy, silver, or magical weapons. See the Description of Contessa Von Blut on Page ** to see what qualifies as "holy"], Mind Control 10 (Extras: Conscious, Mental Link), Regeneration 5 (Resurrection; Flaw: Limited [Does not work if he has been beheaded or impaled with a wooden stake]), Super-Movement 1 (Wall-Crawling), Super-Senses 3 (Darkvision, Acute Hearing)
Equipment: Oversized doctor's bag, containing 19th century medical gear (which Jack no longer knows how to use) and a seemingly endless supply of wooden stakes (5 Damage)
Drawbacks: Weakness (dependant on blood, common, minor, -2pts.), Weakness (holy symbols, dazed for one round by losing an opposed Charisma check, common, moderate, -3 pts.), Weakness (Sunlight, minor, per round, destroyed after 10 rounds, -8 points) Vulnerable (to attacks from sharp stabbing weapons made of wood Common, Moderate, -3 pts)

Adventures With Doctor Jack 1) Enfant du Sang

A giant freighter smashes its way into port at midnight, crushing everything in its path. All its lights are out, there is no way for anyone on the docks to prepare for the disaster.

After they manage to stop the gigantic container ship (or fail to stop it) the PCs may want to board it to find out what caused the disaster. At first it looks as though the ship has been abandoned. Yet none of the lifeboats have been used. There are signs that some terrible struggle took place on board. The crew seems to have attempted to barricade themselves on the bridge and the captain has welded himself into his stateroom (he's dead of suffocation—the only corpse on board).

Someone has ripped the log-book to pieces, but the remaining fragments tell a horrible tale. Something stalked the crew by night. Something foul and sadistic and unstoppable. It wanted their blood. Just as the PCs start to understand what happened here, the police board the ship and there is a huge commotion. They have caught a survivor in the hold, a stowaway. He calls himself Doctor Jack.

Despite the fact that he's being charged as a suspect in twenty-eight counts of murder, Doctor Jack remains cool under interrogation and refuses to cooperate with the police. He will only speak to the PCs (or to whichever one of them has the strongest mystic credentials) and after failing to break him (he somehow reduces their staff psychologist to tears) the cops reluctantly call in the Player Characters.

He tells them that there is no time to lose. He is pursuing the Contessa von Blut herself. After chasing her across Europe he stowed away on the ship she was using to transport herself to the new world. It was a foolish, unbelievably dangerous thing to do, but there was no other way to know where she was going. And now that he knows for sure, the news is very dire.

After decades of brooding and planning, she is ready to find and kill the legendary Enfant du Sang—a child of perfect innocence whose blood will enable her to walk in the full light of day. The prophecies

surrounding the birth of the Enfant du Sang are vague and contradictory, but they precisely predict the hour of the child's birth. The Enfant would be six years old now, would be of French ancestry, from a very old family and would have been born somewhere on the east coast of North America.

The Contessa has a list of twenty-three children, any one of whom might be the Enfant du Sang. She is going to drain the blood from them all, until she finds the right one. But first she will need to establish herself, to find a base of operations and allies in the underworld and to create some servitors who know the ground.

She will no doubt be baffled but intoxicated by the strange new world of the twenty-first century and may want to enjoy herself and explore it a bit, too. If the PCs help Doctor Jack to strike now, before she has grown too strong, they might have a chance of driving her off. But first they have to break him out of custody.

Should the PCs trust Doctor Jack? Is he in fact leading them into some grisly trap? We leave the answer in the hands of the GM.

2) Foundation of Horrors

Doctor Jack stumbles up to the door of the Player Characters' headquarters (or into some public place where they hang out, if they don't have an actual headquarters per se). Wounded, bleeding and weary, he is pursued by three crossbow-wielding vampire hunters from a group called the Van Helsing Foundation.

Doctor Jack will explain hastily to the Player Characters that they have to hide him, that he has found out something monstrous, unthinkable, and that the hunters are coming to kill him before he tells anyone.

At this very moment the kill-squad from the Van Helsing Foundation arrives at the scene. They tell the PCs that Doctor Jack is a very dangerous vampire, full of deceitful lies and that the PCs should hand him over for disposal now. If the PCs refuse or try to question them in any way, they abruptly announce that they can see the PCs are already his blood-slaves and they will attempt to kill everyone.

If the PCs manage to get Doctor Jack somewhere safe, he tells them the awful secret. The Foundation is corrupt—it has become the tool of some powerful vampire lord, who uses it to wipe out his enemies and keep other vampire hunters away from his own operations. Or her operations—Dr. Jack doesn't yet know which vampire lord it is. Nor does he really know what to do next.

How much of this story is a lie? The Van Helsing Foundation is real enough. They have about forty agents, equipped with crossbows, garlic and holy symbols, scattered across ten "Chapters" in various cities around the Untied States and Europe (place chapters wherever it would be convenient for your plot). They may or may not have been founded by Jack Seward's own friend and mentor, Professor Abraham Van Helsing, but they certainly claim to operate in his name.

We're including some stats for a typical operative on the next page. They are a fairly motley bunch, with widely different abilities and backgrounds, but they all tend to be about PL5. They are ruthless and fanatical. They make no distinction between rapacious vampires who murder people nightly and those who manage to live without hurting anyone. As far as the Foundation is concerned, vampires lie a lot, they have the ability to cloud your mind if you waste time talking to them, so the only real option is to kill them all indiscriminately, along with their human slaves.

Whether or not Jack is telling the truth about their leadership is up to the GM. It could well be that Doctor Jack himself is the villain, and that he's trying to lead the Player Characters into destroying the only thing standing between humanity and the nightmarish, bloodsucking evil that threatens it. In either case, the Foundation won't stop trying to kill him.

Stats for a typical vampire-killer from the Van Helsing Foundation

PL: 5

Str: 12 (+1) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 12 (+1)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: 6 **Attack Bonus:** 5
Defense: 5 (2 if Flatfooted)
Toughness Save: 5 (1 without Body Armor) **Fortitude Save:** 5 **Reflexes Save:** 5 **Willpower Save:** 2 (5 vs. mental attacks)

Skills: Climb 3 (+2), Bluff 5 (+7), Craft (Mechanical) 6 (+8), Diplomacy 5 (+7), Gather Information 5 (+7), Investigate 7 (+8), Notice 8 (+10), Stealth 8 (+10), Sense Motive 5 (+7)

Feats: Assessment, Connected, Dodge Focus 3, Equipment 3 (15pts of Equipment), Improved Initiative, Interpose, Inventor, Ranged Pin (with crossbow), Track **Powers:** Mind Shield 3

Equipment: Body Armor (5 Impervious Protection), Crossbow (Ranged Weapon, 5 Damage), Holy Symbol, Never-Ending Bag of Wooden Stakes (Melee Weapon, 5 Damage)

Complications: Fanatically dedicated to wiping out vampires, can't be reasoned with, will risk life, soul, reputation, imprisonment, in order to strike at a nosferatu. Does not care very much if he or she accidentally kills a human being while trying to slay a vampire.

The Saturday Man

PL: 23
Real Name: Unknown; may be Baron Samadhi, Lucifer or Saint Murder the Damned

"I'm the one they named the Saturday Night Special after. I'm the reason dudes always seem to get killed on Saturday night. I am the Saturday Man! Dig me or die!. Or better yet, dig me* and *die!"

Str: 18 (+4) **Dex:** 20 (+5) **Con:** 18 (+4)
Int: 48 (+18) **Wis:** 48 (+18)
Cha: 48 (+18)
Initiative: 13 **Attack Bonus:** 23
Defense: 23 **Toughness Save:** 24 (20 Impervious) **Fortitude Save:** n/a **Reflexes Save:** 15
Willpower Save: 23

Skills: Bluff 2 (+20), Diplomacy 10 (+28), Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 10 (+28), Notice, Perform (Oratory) 10 (+28), Sense Motive 1 (+19)
Feats: Assessment, Diehard, Distract, Fascinate, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 20, Improved Initiative 2, Move-By Action, Startle, Takedown Attack, Taunt
Powers: Aid 23 (Flaw: Limited [he can only use this power if someone asks him to, and if they make a deal with him in exchange, he cannot use it on himself]), ESP 20 (Extra: Dimensional), Flight 8, Healing 23 (Power Feats: Persistent, Regrowth; Extras: Energizing, Resurrection, Total; Flaw: Limited [he can only use this power if someone asks him to, and if they make a deal, he cannot use it on himself]), Immaterial 4 (Still takes damage from Magical attacks), Immunity 30 (to all Fortitude effects), Illusions 20 (Extra: Action; Flaw: Phantasms), Neutralize Magical Powers 20, Protection 20 Impervious, Regeneration 4 (Resurrection; Extras: Reincarnate), Strike 20 (Extras: Affects Corporeal, Aura, Mighty), Super-Senses 16 (Magical Awareness, Blindsight, Darkvision, Detect Magic, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Precognition, Postcognition), Telepathy 20 (Extra: Dimensional), Teleport 20 (Range: Anywhere in the Universe; Power Feats: Change Direction, Change Velocity, Easy, Turnabout, Extras: Accurate, Dimensional, Portal)
Equipment: Sometimes turns up with weird and terrible artifacts which he is willing to give to anyone who asks, in exchange for a favor or two.
Complications: Cannot directly tell a lie.
Drawbacks: Disabled (Can only manifest at night, can only appear in person in a place that is sacred to the gods of murder), Power Drawback (turning off his Insubstantial Power is Sustained duration)
Special: The Saturday Man has the plot-device ability to grant superhuman powers to people who request them of him. As with his Healing and Aid powers, he can only do this if he is asked, and if the person asking him is willing to do something for him in exchange. Sometimes it's a little thing, sometimes it's a big thing, but it's always a bad thing.
Background: He is the one that killers pray to in their secret dreams. Maniacs leave him strange offerings at crudely improvised altars and professional murderers breathe his name to keep them safe when their

bullets run low and the enemy is all around them. He is the eater of kin, the spiller of blood, who walks with dogs in the night and knows secrets that would blast and flay your soul.

They call him the Saturday Man, or Sometimes Saint Murder the Damned, when they can be persuaded to say his name at all. He lurks invisibly outside the bloody spots in the world's fabric, feasting and gloating and laughing with joy. No human cult worships him, but all killers know him in some hidden part of themselves.

He's not the god of war or the god of death, he's the god of murder. Is he the thing that has tempted mankind to bloody acts of carnage from the dawn of time? An outside force that corrupts our nature? Or did we create him ourselves from our dark and hungry cravings? Opinion is divided on the subject, but most mystics agree that whatever he is, he didn't start visiting our world in person until some time in the 1950s.

In some respects he resembles the Voodoo death-god Baron Samadhi or his associate, Carrefour, but he is much less concerned with death than with the act of killing itself. Anyone who makes an offering of bullets, blood and filthy prayers can get to speak with him, provided their heart is pure in its murderousness, and sometimes he gives them weird powers.

He seems to be working toward the culmination of some huge and terrible scheme, moving human beings around like chess pieces, but what the stakes of the game might be or who he is playing it against, we simply do not know (by which we mean that we're leaving that to the GM to work into the background of the campaign world—the Saturday Man's evil schemes could be a major part of your world's secret history or he could just be shoving people around at random for the twisted joy of it).

Whatever awful plans he has for mankind, they don't seem to involve our extinction. If the world is drowned in silence forever, who will be left to kill one another? Instead he seems to want a world filled with glorious unending violence.

Using The Saturday Man in Your Campaign: The Saturday Man is a lurking presence who manipulates events from behind the scenes, for the most part. He gives maniacs and psychopaths superhuman abilities or artifacts of terrible power. He may well be the one who brought the Eye of Rage and Splendor into the world—it's exactly his style. If the PCs disrupt his plans enough or stumble on a villain carrying out some loathsome private ritual to invoke him, he may actually appear in person. If he does, he never stays for long.

Sometimes he takes a liking to a Player Character (especially one who is struggling with some moral conflict over whether or not it's right to kill people) and he will tag along invisibly with them on their adventures, whispering horrible advice and diseased suggestions in their ear.

Good natured for an arch-fiend, he always seems amused by people's attempts to thwart him, even if they succeed. He speaks ordinary conversational English (or Spanish, or whatever language he needs) and uses slang terms that seem to have come straight out of a 1970s "blaxploitation" film.

Driving him back into his home dimension (or back into the sordid depths of the human unconscious, whichever you prefer) is about the best most teams of Player Characters can hope to achieve against him, but if your PCs find this too frustrating in the long run, you can always create some magical artifact that does inordinate amounts of damage to him, or even that seals a place off from him for good. And every time the PCs drive him off, the area they chased him away from dramatically improves. The crime rate goes down, the gang war or the insurgency stops, peace talks are suddenly held by the warring factions, flowers grow in the vacant lot where people were once gunned down daily, etc.

Adventures With the Saturday Man: 1) Jack Carver and the Rat-Boyzz

Jack Carver worships the Saturday Man, and honors him with strange and secret offerings. He stalks the city's subway trains at night, catching random citizens and

dragging them off to a fate best left undescribed. Once he has finished doing unexpected things with knives to their soft parts and hidden their remains, he leaves patterns of blood and bones on the subway tracks, wherever the Saturday Man requires them.

He does this all for love. For Jack hopes that if he spreads enough blood and terror, the Saturday Man will give him the power to confront the Rat-Boyzz. This is the only way he might get his Norma back.

The Rat-Boyzz are an exclusive fraternity of sadistic young psychopaths from some of the city's wealthiest families. These merry scamps are always looking for new tricks and thrills, and lately they've taken to seeking them on the subway.

A month or so ago they set upon Jack Carver and his wife, Norma. They cut Jack in some funny, clever ways, and left him without the ability to speak or do certain other things. But the worst thing that they took away from him was Norma. They didn't kill her, but they dragged her off to some unknown place.

As Jack hung between death and life he called out for someone, anyone, to help him get his wife back. Unfortunately, the Saturday Man answered first.

Jack wants desperately to confront the Rat-Boyzz before they do something unthinkable to Norma, but they're rich and well-protected, while he is an illegal alien (from England) who doesn't even have a job. There are a lot of them, and they have a lot of knives. He only has one.

The Saturday Man offered to help him open a gateway to the dimension called the Seventh Throne of Hooks and Howling, where he would find all the power he needed. It has taken him much too long to prepare the sacrifices that he needs, but every time that he has asked, the Saturday Man has assured him that the Rat-Boyzz still have Norma, and that they will give her back if confronted the right way. He isn't lying. After the PCs try and fail to catch Jack Carver, they should stumble across his journals and find out what the "Subway Slasher" is really up to. They should learn where he intends to open the gate, and they should have a chance to catch up with him just as he confronts the Rat-Boyzz with his new-found power. They are skating in an outdoor plaza when he finds them. Alas, they killed Norma some time ago, but they still keep some parts of her in a box, which they will give him when he demands her back.

Jack is now a PL 9 character, more than strong enough to hold his own against the Rat-Boyzz. But he becomes completely unhinged and unable to defend himself once he sees what is in the box. Worse, the gateway to the Seventh Throne of Hooks and Howls is still wide open, and now worse things than Jack Carver are spilling out into the subway, hungry for sane brains.

Stats For Jack Carver

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 16 (+3)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 10 (+0)
Initiative: 2 **Attack Bonus:** 9
Defense: 9 **Toughness Save:** 3
Fortitude Save: 9 **Reflexes Save:** 8
Willpower Save: 9

Skills: Intimidate 9 (+9), Notice 8 (+10), Profession (butcher) 7 (+8), Stealth 8 (+10)
Feats: Distract, Improved Critical (Knives), Startle
Powers: Insubstantial 4 (Still Vulnerable to Magical Attacks when in Incorporeal Form), Super-Senses 2 (Low-Light Vision, Tracking [by Scent])
Equipment: Complete set of butcher knives (Melee Weapon, 5 Damage; Extras: Affects Corporeal, Penetrating 3), Regeneration 10 (Can make a Recovery Check vs. being Injured or Disabled with one round of rest)
Complications: Totally obsessed with rescuing his wife, has no other purpose to his existence
Drawbacks: Disabled (Mute)

Stats for a typical Rat-Boy
PL: 4

Str: 16 (+3) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 14 (+2)
Int: 12 (+1) **Wis:** 10 (+0) **Cha:** 14 (+2)
Initiative: 6 **Attack Bonus:** 4
Defense: 4 **Toughness Save:** 2 **Fortitude Save:** 4 **Reflexes Save:** 4 **Willpower Save:** 4
Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Gather Information 3 (+5), Intimidate 6 (+8), Knowledge (Popular Culture) 5 (+6), Notice 4 (+4),

Search 3 (+3), Stealth 4 (+6)

Feats: Connected, Improved Initiative, Quick-Draw, Sneak Attack, Taunt
Equipment: Knife (Melee Weapon, 3 Damage), Really Expensive Handgun (Ranged Weapon, 4 Damage)
Complications: Impulsive sadistic psychopath, prone to doing stupid and vicious things, even if it gets him in terrible trouble

2) Saturday Night's All Right for Fighting

The Saturday Man decides that Captain Kill-You has grown desperate enough to have a little fun with. The Captain once made a bargain with the Saturday Man for his superhuman powers, but he doesn't want them anymore. See his description earlier in this book for more details.

The Saturday Man appears to Captain Kill-You in a dream, and explains that he would be happy to take back his powers and let him lead a normal life. All he has to do in return is to kill his parents and eat them by tomorrow at midnight.

Captain Kill-You has no desire to do any such thing. Frantic for a way out of this bargain, he comes up with a surprisingly cunning subterfuge. He pretends to be concerned, and explains to the Saturday Man that superheroes are constantly foiling his evil schemes. What if he makes every effort to devour his parents, but he gets thwarted at the last second by some do-gooder hero. To his surprise, the Saturday Man agrees that should that happen, the reward is still his to keep. All Kaptain Skumbag has to do is to make a good try.

Amazed at having tricked the Saturday Man into giving him a loophole, Captain Kill-You calls up the Player Characters, threatens them, tells them that he plans to kill and eat Mr. And Mrs. Treadwell (his parents) at their home in suburban Long Island tomorrow at midnight and that the PCs had better not try to stop him. If the PCs seem dubious, or mock him for trying to lead them into some kind of clumsy and obvious trap, he's willing to break down and confide the whole truth in them. He's off to eat his parents and he needs them to stop him.

It's not going to be possible to warn his parents in advance. Phone calls to the Treadwells get only their voice mail. No one answers their door if the PCs come knocking (in any case they probably won't have time).

The Treadwell home is out in a fairly woodsy part of Long Island. It's not a mansion, just a reasonably nice two-story house. There are a lot of old trees in the yard, which partly obscure the PCs' view.

The Player Characters will probably try to get there early so that they can lie in wait. But Captain Kill-You presents himself almost immediately, just after they've gotten into position. He makes a clumsy, half-hearted rush at the PCs, giving them every chance to hit him with ranged attacks before he closes with them, fully hoping that they beat him.

But the Saturday Man is not actually fooled, and he has arranged a nasty surprise for poor Kaptain Skumbag. Another and far less pleasant of his agents is on their way to the proceedings tonight. As Captain Kill-You charges the players, he sees the horrible cannibalistic warlock who calls himself "Selina The Beautiful Teenaged Witch" (see page 11 for a full description—he's perhaps the worst villain in this book) descend out of the night on his family home, and slip inside. Now he has to fight the PCs in earnest. If he doesn't get past them, who knows what that maniac might do to his hapless parents?

The Saturday Man has one final joke in store for Kaptain Skumbag. His parents aren't home. They're safe on vacation in Barbados, a thousand miles away. Selina will do some awful things to some of Captain Kill-You's old toys, but that's about all he stands to lose here, apart from his self-respect and his last chance at a normal life.

3) Early One Saturday Morning

The next time a Player Character is dying, as they hover on the threshold between this world and the next, the Saturday Man appears to them, and says that they can have their life back, if they do something for him in exchange. It won't be anything evil—he knows they don't dig on evil deeds. Just a simple little thing.

If they say yes, or ask him what they have to do, he explains the whole deal. After they recover from their injuries, they should go to a toy store (he'll tell them which one), buy an action figure and give it to one of the two little boys standing outside—the one on the right. It's not a haunted toy store, it's not an evil toy. In fact, to add a little spice to the deal, it's an action figure of the PC (unless this isn't possible).

Most PCs will immediately sense danger and won't want to take the Saturday Man up on the deal. That's why this is a particularly good trick to play on a PC who has been mortally wounded while defending something they really care about. If they have to choose between getting ensnared in the Saturday Man's schemes and letting their girlfriend get eaten or a bus full of school kids get thrown off a bridge or the world get destroyed, they'll be more inclined to consider his offer. To be fair, only pull this scenario on a character who has screwed up badly, as a kind of deus ex machina to let them off the hook. Of course, now they're on a worse hook.

The Saturday Man will cheerfully answer any questions a suspicious PC might have about the deal, but he's evasive and mendacious. For example, if a PC asks him why he wants them to give the kid the toy, he'll say "Because he wants it real bad. I'm not allowed to do good deeds myself" (this is sort of true) "or to lie, by the way" (this is a lie).

He'll even assure them that their soul is not at stake, and that they're not about to damn themselves by dealing with him. Weirdly, he's telling the truth about this last part. The PC will surely regret getting involved in this plan, but it will not damn their soul. Frankly, the Saturday Man isn't very interested in corrupting anyone's soul. He just wants to destroy their bodies—and perhaps to fill their minds with horror and despair. He'd much rather make innocent people suffer than turn good people bad.

If the PC agrees to participate in the scheme, they are likely to try to wriggle out of the deal. Their first move will probably be to find out everything they can about the toy store and the action figure. Both are completely ordinary.

When the PC visits the store, two little boys walk up to the display window and stare inside. They're both well-dressed kids, about six years old, with expensive haircuts. They look like nice boys, and they are.

If the PC hesitates, the Saturday Man taps them on the shoulder, right there in the toy store, and says that he's worried about them, people say bad and freaky things happen to cats who bust deals with him. He's not sure that's true, he says, but it might be better not to take chances.

The two boys watch the PC approach, wide-eyed and a little scared. Their names are Penhurst "Davey" Fitzhume III and Robert Stansfield Black. Although they are both rich kids, from very prominent families, neither one could have bought the toy by themselves (they're only six, and their parents don't entrust them with money yet). They are best friends, at least until the PC hands the toy to Robbie Black.

When the PCs give the toy to young Mr. Black, Davey screams, a scream of utter loss, betrayal and rage. The PC didn't realize such a little boy could scream that loud. Davey runs off crying and shrieking. Robbie stares at the toy in his hand, flings it away as though it were hot and runs sobbing in another direction.

Here's what's really going on. Davey wants that action figure—wants it desperately, like nothing he's ever wanted before in his life. His friend Robbie doesn't want it at all. His dad has always told him that superheroes are stupid and Robbie would do or think anything to please his dad. Davey's parents don't think much of superheroes either, and they wouldn't buy him the toy.

Two months ago, the Saturday Man came to Davey in a dream, and told him that he could have the toy, if he smothered his grandma to death in her sleep. Davey is a good boy, and he refused. A week later, his grandma died of pneumonia, quite suddenly. Guilt-stricken, baffled and aghast, Davey hasn't told anyone but his best friend Robbie about what happened. Robbie didn't know what to say to his friend to comfort

him (he's only six, after all) so he told him that it was a stupid toy, anyway.

The two of them wandered over to the toy store today, miserable and scared, without even knowing why. They stood outside for a while, afraid to go in. Then the PC walked out of the store and handed Robbie the action figure. You can imagine what Davey thought--Robbie smothered his Grandma to get the toy! And Davey's favorite superhero was in on the deal!

What happens next depends on what the PC does. If he or she fails to catch Davey, or fails to convince him that the whole thing was just a horrible trick on them both, then he sets Robbie's house on fire and four people die in the conflagration, including Robbie's dad.

The Saturday Man appears in the aftermath and tells the PC that they did great. Robbie's dad, Foster Nightshade Black, was a retired supervillain who tried to bust a deal with the Saturday Man. He was really well protected against supernatural attack, so the Saturday Man had to find another way to get at him. In about six years he would have destroyed the world (or at least so the Saturday Man claims) so the PCs should feel pretty good about themselves just now—they saved the world and their souls are pure. They didn't do anything wrong, as far as the powers of the cosmos are concerned. The bad stuff they did do was all his own fault anyway, although that won't cheer Davey and Robbie up very much, he supposes. He hopes the PC enjoys thinking about this in heaven, for eternity. Still, there's dudes who've done a lot worse to get into the place.

Why did the Saturday Man want to save the world? Because if the world was to end, who would be left to kill one another?

If the PCs do manage to get the whole thing straightened out, and poor traumatized Davey and Robbie are once again friends, then the Saturday Man's plan was different. In this case Robbie's father isn't a supervillain, he's just a rich guy with a creepy-sounding name. After the PCs get the whole mess put to bed, calm down the suspicious parents and their bodyguards and so forth, the Saturday Man appears to congratulate them. They did great, he says. Davey will grow up dedicated to fighting injustice and evil, Robbie will grow up hating superheroes with a crazy passion. Davey will become a superhero, Robbie will become a Senator, and at a certain moment in 2060 it will suddenly become absolutely critical for the two of them to trust one another for just a few seconds. And then they're both going to remember what happened when they were six.

"But" he says "you'll have long since gone off to your eternal reward in Heaven, so I guess there's not a lot you can do about it. Anyway I've left just enough out of this story that you're sure to screw it all up even worse if you try. You may be asking yourself if you really deserve to go to heaven after all you've done here. And if it's damnation you're looking for, there's another little job you could do for me..."

THE KING IN TATTERS

Real Name: None
PL: 25

"All light ends in darkness, all screams end in silence."

Str: 16(+3) **Dex:** 10 (+0) **Con:** -
Int: 20 (+5) **Wis:** 24 (+7)
Cha: 18 (+4)
Initiative: 0 **Attack Bonus:** 15
Defense: 9 **Toughness Save:** 25 Impervious **Fortitude Save:** n/a **Reflexes Save:** 0 **Willpower Save:** 25

Skills: Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 15 (+20), Notice 1 (+8)
Feats: Fearless, Fearsome Presence 25
Powers: Blast 25 (Power Feats: Alternate Powers: [Blast 25; Extra: Homing], Progression 3 [on "Area" Extra]; Extras: Area [Blast Covers a Shapeable Area of up to 250 five-foot cubes]), Flight 10, Immunity 34 (all Fortitude effects, Dazzle Effects, Critical Hits), Magic 25 (Spells: Neutralize [Magical Powers Only]; Power Feats: Additional Spells [Disintegrate, Drain any one stat, ESP, Immaterial, Obscure, Strike [Extra: Aura], Teleport [Range: Anywhere in the Universe; Extra: Dimensional]) Impervious Protection 25, Super-Senses (Magical Blindsight, Darkvision)
Equipment: Headquarters (Labyrinth of Dust and Shadows, somewhere on the wrong side of Infinity, fill it with whatever awful stuff you wish)
Drawbacks: Disabled (has no sense of touch, performs all skill rolls requiring fine manual dexterity at a -6), Hideous (very common, moderate)
Background: Lord of ten-thousand dimensions of hopeless despair, monarch of bones and silence, the King in Tatters comes. The Pulsing Crown rests on his brow and our doom sits in his rotting hand. Where he walks, he leaves dust and stillness—so he would be happy to tell you.

No one living is insane enough to worship the King in Tatters, nor does he seek anyone's adoration. Instead he seeks everyone's death. He doesn't want to rule the world, he wants to smother it in darkness and blot the sun and moon from its sky. He wants emptiness and silence for the cosmos. And he has done this to more than one cosmos in the past.

The only reason that the Earth remains safe from him for the moment is that it doesn't have his attention yet. How he would hate it! All whirring with noise and motion, never sitting still for an instant. But it won't take long for him to fix that.

Few mystical texts mention the King in Tatters, for no one would ever want to invoke him or draw his notice. He comes from some long-lost dimension at the far end of time; some realm of total entropy and absolute hopeless grief. By now he rules a fairly wide swath of infinity, although it doesn't require much time or effort to administer a realm of utter nothingness, dust and ruins, where nothing stirs but himself. It is no exaggeration to call him the lord of ten-thousand dimensions. It may be more than that. Maybe a lot more.

While he is a deadly opponent, he is not a cruel one. People who suffer get all agitated and make noise. He prefers the calm and quiet of death. Nor does he care enough about mortals to bother seeking revenge against them. He would never stoop to consider one of them his personal enemy. This concept is completely beyond him.

If a dimension resisted him

vigorously he might have to think up some kind of cunning plan to get past its defenses, but he's so powerful that he hasn't felt the need for a very long time. For the most part, all he has to do to kill another world is to show up.

A distant, distracted opponent, he seldom even acknowledges the presence of anyone trying to attack him. He rarely speaks and doesn't move very often. He just appears, seated on his terrible throne, and hovers over the world as it perishes. As a handy rule of thumb for the GM, he will never speak to or look directly at anyone who is less than PL 21. When he does speak, it is in a dry, faint, slow whisper. He seldom addresses anyone directly, and instead just makes cryptic, threatening observations (see his quote).

He would never tell heroes that resistance is useless or that they are fools to oppose him or that his power approaches the infinite or any such megalomaniacal arch-villain stuff. Nor is he much of a gloater. Once he wins, who would there be to gloat to?

Using the King in Tatters in Your Campaign: Gaaah! Don't let your players fight this guy directly unless they've been very, very bad.

It's tricky to create a good scenario for a world-devourer like this one, since he's not only so powerful, but so static as well. Nonetheless it's a staple of the genre to have terrible gods like this lurking out on the edges of the campaign universe, so we thought we'd provide you with one.

Most adventures that revolve around the King in Tatters should involve keeping him from noticing the Earth, or closing some gateway to his realm before he has a chance to see it. There may be some madman or evil genius who is foolishly about to open a door to the King in Tatters' domain and who must be stopped before he brings destruction on the Universe. Perhaps he's suicidal, perhaps he misunderstands what the King really is.

You could also run a scenario where the King's herald shows up on Earth to tell the world to make itself ready for destruction, that the King in Tatters will arrive soon and that they are to prepare themselves for annihilation—or not, just as they choose. Then the PCs might be able to bargain with or kill the herald before he has a chance to report back to his awful master and tell him where the Earth can be found. The herald should be really tough—PL 18 to 20, but only a shadow of his dread master.

Or a really adventurous group of heroes might try to raid the King's domain for some lost artifact of unbelievable power, and attempt to sneak out without drawing his attention.

If your PCs are totally stuck, if they have failed to prevent the King's arrival and here he is, ready to reduce the world to nothingness, there is one last card you can play to keep your campaign from coming to an ignominious end. To everyone's shock, the Saturday Man appears and rushes to his world's defense.

"If there was nobody left to kill each other," he explains *"Saturday Night could get kind of dull—you dig?"*

The Saturday Man isn't nearly as tough as the King in Tatters, but he might wound him before he dies, which could give the PCs the chance to hurt him badly enough to drive him away. This world tastes funny, perhaps he'll leave it alone now.

Adventures With the King in Tatters: 1) The Book of Nothing

Somewhere on the edges of the King's domain lies the Holophrastic Library of Infinite Regret.

No one speaks in the Library. Its soundless halls extend to infinity in all the directions we can conceive of—and many more. Each of its giant volumes contains a single word, comprised of a single letter, comprised of a single mark. It is the word "despair." To pronounce it would take eons.

One corner of the Library of Infinite Regret touches our world, and on certain unfortunate occasions one or another of its books slips through into our realm.

The PCs are unlucky enough to be drawn into this matter when sadness engulfs a run-down neighborhood in the city they protect. A minor occultist and full-time devotee of grief, one Norville Oates, has

uncovered a volume from the Library of Infinite Regret and is trying to pronounce the word it contains. Everyone within five blocks is overcome with grief, silently weeping and shuddering. Cars crash into one another, fires start to burn out of control and a perpetual twilight falls over the neighborhood.

Anyone who enters this domain will suffer a PL 9 Mind Control attack each and every round they can spend in it (there is only one command: Stand There and Do Nothing but Feel Miserable) until they can locate Mr. Oates in his cluttered, decaying mansion and wrest the book from his hands. Once he is relieved of his terrible book, Oates will fall to the floor, unconscious, aged by a dozen years. If he recovers his wits, he is a changed man, devoted to the cause of joy and contentment forever afterwards. Now that he's seen them up close, misery and despair aren't nearly as much fun as he thought. He'll gladly help the PCs, and even though he's only a PL 8 magician, he knows a lot about the matter they now find themselves entangled in. Here are some stats for him.

Norville Oates
PL: 8

Str: 10 (+0) **Dex:** 14 (+2) **Con:** 8 (-1) **Int:** 16 (+3) **Wis:** 14 (+2) **Cha:** 8 (-1)
Initiative: 2 **Attack Bonus:** 6
Defense: 8 **Toughness Save:** -1
Fortitude Save: -1 **Reflexes Save:** 2
Willpower Save: 8

Skills: Craft (Artistic) 3 (+4), Concentration 11 (+13), Knowledge (Arcane Lore) 7 (+10), Languages 7 (Aramaic, French, German, Greek Hebrew, Latin, Russian), Notice 3 (+5), Profession (Depressing Poet) 5 (+8)
Feats: Ritualist, Detect (Magic)
Powers: Astral Form 8 (Power Feat: Dimensional 3 [can reach any accessible dimension in your campaign setting]), Magic 7 (Spells: Drain [any power with the Descriptor "magical"], Alternate Powers: ESP 7, Neutralize 7 [only powers with a mystical source]); Super-Senses 2 (Detect Magic, Detect invisible beings)
Drawback: Power Loss (Must be able to gesture and speak freely to use Magic)

The GM should play Oates as a comic figure, who tries desperately to be cheerful and upbeat without a clue as to how to do it. Happiness clearly does not suit him. He constantly tries to tell jokes, and fails.

If the PCs ask him where he found that cursed volume, he explains that he performed a ritual to locate the unhappiest book in the world, and was directed by the spirits of misery to go look at a particular spot on the shelves of the Argentine National Library in Buenos Aires. There it was, jammed awkwardly onto a shelf where it didn't belong, three times the size of any of the books around it.

Anyone looking at the pages of the book must make a Willpower Save vs. DC 15 or begin compulsively reading it aloud, which has exactly the same effect as when Norville Oates tried it.

A little occult research or a little help from Mr. Oates reveals what the book is, where it comes from and why its very presence is putting the Earth in danger. For the King in Tatters will sense that one of his volumes is missing, and soon. Only the fact that there are an infinite number of them has kept him from noticing it yet. If he comes looking for it, and finds a warm and lively world like Earth, buzzing with life and activity, he is going to try to snuff it out before he goes home.

The PCs are going to have to sneak into the Holophrastic Library of Infinite Regret and put the book back in its place on the shelf. This is extremely dangerous. Anyone who spends too much time in the Library risks being overcome with sorrow and standing there in silence among the shelves until the stars burn out. Sometimes awful Things wander the stacks, looking for a choice volume of despair they can borrow and enjoy. Any evil extradimensional sorcerer or Thing of Entropy the PCs encounter among the shelves should be at least PL 15, just to be able to survive in this place.

Reaching the Library is deceptively simple. Any sufficiently potent focus of despair will let a sorcerer with the power "Dimensional Travel" find the way to its silent stacks.

A shabby downtown public library, full of snoozing derelicts and broken dreams, should be the ideal spot to find your way into that more terrible Library beyond. But so might a house haunted by ghosts of unutterable sadness, or a gallery of paintings by some lost soul who once glimpsed the Court of the King in Tatters or any other really potent locus of unhappiness. Let the GM decide what would be most dramatically effective and would fit best with the PCs.

The Library itself exerts a Paralysis 11 effect per minute on anyone who spends more than one minute inside. It will take 4d6 minutes minus the smartest character's Intelligence bonus to find the empty space on its limitless shelves. It will take an absolute minimum of two minutes. Roll 4d6 again, once more subtracting the smartest character's Intelligence bonus, to see how long it takes to find their way out again. The Library defeats all efforts to make a path through its corridors. PCs who have trailed a string behind them will find it tied in loops that go nowhere; a trail of breadcrumbs will bend back on itself in impossible ways.

If the PCs are having too easy a time of it, the GM should feel free to let them stumble over some awful patron or librarian stalking among the shelves. Or perhaps the King himself draws nigh...

2) In the Court of the Ragged King

Frenzied, mad with grief, a creature who calls itself "Null-Unit" falls from the sky. It is too upset to be reasoned with and goes on a brief rampage before the PCs defeat it. Use the standard PL10 "Powerhouse" template for Null-Unit.

It is fleeing the charred remnants of its imploded universe. The King in Tatters rose from the void between realities and crushed the cosmos Null Unit was pledged to protect.

Null Unit was unable to save its own world, and came here, to the next place slated for destruction. But this world is so puny! It has barely any heroes at all!

Before Null Unit has a chance to tell the PCs very much about their foe, the herald of the King in Tatters, the creature they call the "Desolation Angel," appears in the sky and announces that her master will arrive in two days to teach this dimension the peace that is to be found in oblivion—they are most fortunate, for the King will come Himself.

Even if the PCs could kill or imprison the herald, it wouldn't do any good this time. The King in Tatters already knows about the Earth and is already on his way.

The world is gripped by panic. Weird and horrible supernatural events, fiendish signs and sinister portents appear around the globe as His Obliterating Majesty draws nigh.

Accompanied by Null-Unit, the PCs must race to the far ends of reality, rousing our dimension's greatest, oldest powers to rise in its defense. We don't know what gods populate your game world, but the PCs should try to contact as many of them as they can in the remaining three days. These should be entities with an average PL of 22-24. Some of them will be cranky and odd, some will not want to help and some are terribly evil and will want to make unsavory bargains with the PCs in exchange for their assistance. Can the universe yet be saved? Or are we fated, like so many others, to fall into horrible silence?

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